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THEORY

OF THE

MORAL SYSTEM,

INCLUDING A

Possible Reason why Sin exists.

Hartford:
PUBLISHED BY F. A. BROWN.
1855.

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PREFACE.

SAID a sturdy carpenter, at the close of a preaching service in the ship-yard, "If God is so good, why not redeem the angels?"

And what man, illiterate or educated, *if he thinks*, is without such and more troublesome inquiries. Why did the angels come to need redemption? Why did the first pair, happy and holy in Eden, sin? If God be infinitely wise, could he not have devised some plan to save his subjects from rebellion? If infinitely powerful, could he not have executed the plan? And if infinitely good, would he not have both devised and executed it? Why then a race of subjects in rebellion? Why is human experience invariably that of sin and suffering? Especially, how is it possible for these and kindred facts, to be comprehended in a harmonious and benevolent system? Who has not thought thus, until thought was anguish? The author of the Conflict of Ages is not alone in

his painful experience; and undoubtedly, many minds pressed with his difficulties and others, would hail with a satisfaction equal to his own, anything which they deemed even a *possible* solution.

Such a solution is attempted in the following treatise. A brief outline of the system developed in it, very nearly as it appears in the *Recapitulation, Part* 2, *Chap.* 7, was first published in the Hartford Religious Herald, Dec. 26, 1845. Since that time, the author has been expanding it according as inclination prompted, or the intervals of professional duty have afforded leisure for the work, until it has assumed the present form. It is written mainly for the common mind; and aims, therefore, not to be metaphysical in its statements, but to present matters in their plainest and simplest aspect.

Should this attempt to grapple with the great questions which have been suggested, be deemed unsatisfactory, it will certainly be less strange than an opposite result, for no effort in this direction has ever yet been regarded as successful. That it will secure for itself, therefore, the general assent, is too much to be expected; while still the hope is indulged, that it will be found to indicate a somewhat different method of exploration than has hitherto been attempted, worthy of being followed up by other and abler minds.

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ERRATA.

41st page, fourth line from bottom for *Τῶα* read *Ζῶα*.

136th page, fourth line from bottom for *lawful* read *awful*.

153d page, second line from top for *are* read *were*.

210th page, eighth line from bottom erase *and therefore*.

INTRODUCTION.

The phenomena of the material heavens are to a great extent unknown. Only a few things respecting them can we demonstrate to be true. And to man in this world, almost the entire universe will continue to remain an unfathomed mystery. With all his powers of observation sharpened by the most intense and unremitted exercise, and assisted by all the artificial helps which his ingenuity can devise, the astronomer will be able to penetrate but a hair's breadth beyond the post of his observation, and all beyond it will still be among the secret things which God has not seen fit to reveal.

And yet, as the astronomer knows not the exact limit which the Almighty has prescribed to his investigations, his restless mind is never satisfied with past discoveries, but is ever sending its longing gaze over the expanse of

unknown truth; anxious to pierce its mysteries to the utmost; observing every fact, seizing upon every intimation, and rejoicing with joy unspeakable over every new discovery.

Nor do we see anything in the fact that the great proportion of truth respecting the material universe is unrevealed, to prevent his pushing his inquiries in every direction, and ascertaining with all the accuracy he can command, what are the precise limits of actual knowledge.

But he stops not at the simple accumulation of facts. From the few data given by his observation, he presumes to speculate beyond them. He ventures into the region of hypothesis and conjecture, and invents theories more or less plausible, to account for the existing state of things. For instance, he has invented a possible system, embracing the entire material universe, and extending the principle of gravitation to other worlds, and carrying out the plan of the solar system, has supposed the suns and systems of immensity to revolve around some great and unknown center, itself as much

larger than they all, as is the sun larger than his entire train of planets and their satellites.

True, this is a mere conjecture. It is going beyond the boundaries of actual knowledge. It is an effort to fathom the undiscovered regions of space. But we see no valid objection to this. We find in it no proof of an irreverent spirit. Nor do we see aught to forbid his ranging, if he please, the entire field of probable and even possible truth, and suggesting every hypothesis which may occur to him, provided he still adhere to the Baconian principle and regard them only as hypotheses, until they shall have been demonstrated by subsequent discovery to be true or false. We rather discern in it the ardent aspirations of the intelligent spirit, conscious of its godlike powers, yearning to know more and more of the wonders of the Great Architect, and stretching itself to the highest possible conception of the greatness and glory of his works. Nor need we fear that in these efforts of the imagination, our human impressions of the magnificence of God's dominions will ever become too

exalted, or be anything more than the merest approximation to their real grandeur.

Similar remarks may be made respecting God's *moral* system. We know it only "in part." A few great truths we find in the Bible, otherwise unknown, and we learn a few things from our own mental and moral constitution, and what we see transpiring around us on the field of Providential Dispensation. These truths are glorious, many of them surpassingly so, but they are *few*. All that is necessary for the salvation of men, has been revealed, while a multitude of interesting questions which might be raised, have no answer given by Inspiration, and the solution of them, if attempted, must be simply by conjecture. Nor is such conjectural reasoning in respect to the mysteries of Religion, to be regarded as an unwarrantable intrusion into the secrets of the Most High, merely because, not being necessary to human salvation, he has not seen fit to reveal them. Many of the phenomena pertaining to the heavenly bodies are also unrevealed, but we are not on that account repelled from any and all

conjectures respecting them. No more are we repelled from any and all conjectures respecting the moral world, so long as no authority is claimed for them, and they are regarded simply as lying within the limits of possibility. And therefore, should we construct a possible system, embracing the main facts of Reason and Revelation, and suppose that, being possible, it *may* be the plan upon which the moral universe is conducted, there would appear to be in this no more inherent impropriety, than in the construction of the plan before alluded to, embracing the main facts of the material universe.

But furthermore, such an attempt, if successful, might be attended with positive advantages. Thus, the objection most commonly urged against the doctrines of the Bible, is, their intrinsic absurdity. It is absurd, for example, the objector says, that God should hate sin and yet suffer its existence; that he should permit frail beings like ourselves to be tempted by powerful and malignant beings; that he should provide for a single insignificant world like ours, an atonement so costly in its provisions

as is the Bible plan of Redemption. So of many other doctrines.

But all that is necessary to defend any declaration of the Inspired volume from the charge of absurdity, is, simply to show that it is not inconsistent with known truth—that it *may* be true; for when a thing is shown to be possible, its absurdity can not be demonstrated. And, therefore, could a possible system be suggested, embracing the main facts of Revelation, then all the facts and doctrines contained in it, would be effectually defended from the charge of absurdity. Furthermore, should such a system be consistent with itself, and with all known truth, and even appear to a certain extent *plausible*, then would an equal degree of plausibility be, also, imparted to the facts and doctrines contained in it.

Again:—*all* the difficulties and objections appertaining to the doctrines of the Bible, arise from the fact that we are ignorant of their connection with the *entire system*, and are therefore compelled to look at them in their *isolated* position. Were we fully acquainted

with the plan of the moral universe, and could we obtain that connected view of it which God has, every doubt, difficulty and objection, in respect either to the doctrines of the Bible, or the dealings of Providence, would instantly vanish; for we should then see how every part is consistent with every other part; the precise object of each would appear, and the entire system unfold itself before us, even as it lies in the mind of the Almighty, harmonious, benevolent and grand. So if a system can be *imagined*, consistent with itself, and conflicting with no known truth, while it still contains within itself the main doctrines of the Bible, then will it, to a certain extent, be attended with the same result. And this result will follow just in proportion to the degree of apparent harmony and plausibility imparted to it.

It may tend, also, to relieve the minds of hose who are harassed with doubts and difficulties respecting the teachings of Revelation, to see in such a system a *possible* explanation—a *possible* way in which they may be

made to harmonize with acknowledged truth, even though it should appear in almost no degree plausible.

Perhaps enough has been said to show the design of the present work. The effort has been to construct such a system, and to give it as great an air of probability as the circumstances of the case will permit. But whether it shall appear to the reader probable, or only plausible, or even highly improbable, be it remembered, that all that is claimed for it, is simply that it lies within the limits of *possibility*.

PART I.

THE THEORY IN ITS GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MORAL SYSTEM.

WHY, among all possible existences, should a free moral agent have been created, and especially a system of such agents? The question may be answered thus. So far as we can see, a system of free moral agents is best adapted to promote the happiness of God himself, and also of containing within itself the greatest possible amount of enjoyment.

First—It is best adapted to promote the happiness of God himself.

The simple fact that he has created such a system, when his own glory and blessedness could have been the only motive for creating at all, proves this.

But, furthermore, we know both from experience and observation, that the obedience and

affection of intelligent, voluntary beings, are in themselves exceedingly valuable; and that, where they are due, they even promote the happiness of the one receiving them, beyond anything else conceivable.

The obedience and affection of the child are, to every parent, a pure, unfailing well-spring of enjoyment.

But, to be valuable in the highest degree, they must be *free, voluntary,—i. e., freely* exercised, *freely* rendered. And, on this perfect freedom depends, to a very great extent, their desirableness. The vine furnishes us with pleasant fruit, but it is impossible to exercise toward it feelings of approbation and affection, or be made as happy in plucking its delicious clusters, as in receiving them from a friend. And for this reason: that, in the former case, the fruit is furnished from necessity; in the latter, it is presented as the expression of free, voluntary affection. Indeed, constrained affection is either inconceivable or valueless.

We see no reason, therefore, why the affectionate obedience of intelligent voluntary be-

ings, wherever due, is not a higher source of happiness to the one receiving it, than any other conceivable.

And we see no reason, therefore, why the affectionate obedience of free moral beings should not be prized by the God of Heaven above all other things out of himself, on account of its tendency to promote his own blessedness. Certain it is, that we can *conceive* of nothing having an equal tendency, and have every reason, therefore, for supposing that a universe of such beings loving and serving him, would, above all other conceivable things, be regarded by him with satisfaction.

But secondly—A free moral agent *acting rightly,* is himself the happiest being of whom we can form any idea; for he has, superadded to every other conceivable enjoyment, that which springs from the consciousness of *right moral action*—the consciousness of an intelligent purpose and effort to glorify God and promote the welfare of all his creation. We call it "the testimony of an approving conscience," and it is the highest, noblest, most

excellent kind of happiness that we know of. He is fitted, moreover, from his very nature, to appreciate the moral splendor of God's character, and to be drawn into sympathy with him as the great fountain of blessedness. And this, too, must pour through his being a tide of unutterable joy. But this can be experienced only by a moral agent. Manifestly, the inanimate creation can not feel it. The brute creation can not experience it, for they have no conscience, and no capacity for understanding the character of God or appreciating moral relations; and the free moral nature alone, is so constituted as to be drawn into sympathy with the Almighty, or

> "hear the still, small voice of conscience speak
> Its whispering plaudit to the silent soul."

Therefore, a free moral agent, is, on the whole, the best kind of being conceivable—*i. e.*, one capable of giving and experiencing the highest and purest enjoyment; and therefore, also, a *system* of such agents is the best conceivable system, so far as its excellence depends on its

capability of securing the greatest possible amount of happiness.

And, therefore, undoubtedly it is, that God, in his infinite wisdom and benevolence, has chosen such a system, it being the best adapted to promote his own happiness, and being capable, also, of producing on the whole the greatest possible amount of enjoyment.

But, now, it is objected, that such beings must be capable of *sinning*. A being, it is said, can not be perfectly *free* to employ his various powers and faculties in the way of right action, without involving the possibility of his *not* using them thus. If he is absolutely *free* to use them, he must be as free *not* to use them, or to use them improperly; and therefore a system of free moral agents involves the possibility of *sin*; and how then, it is asked, is the creation of such a system consistent with benevolence, involving thus, in its very nature, not merely the *possibility* of transgression, but even, to the Omniscient Mind, the absolute *certainty* of its existence? The question may

admit of the following answer. First—Suppose that all such beings, after their creation, would abuse their freedom, and pervert their powers of moral action. Then, it is replied—such a system of beings would not probably be brought into existence. So far as we can see, perfect benevolence would not admit of it.

But secondly—Suppose that but a very small part of them should thus pervert their free agency. Then, it is replied—if the mischief and unhappiness resulting from this perversion bore but a small proportion to the happiness remaining, and such a system still involved, notwithstanding this diminution, a far greater amount of good than any other *possible*, then Benevolence, so far as we can see, might still require its creation, or at least admit of it.

And now thirdly—No reason whatever exists against the supposition, that this may be the case with the present moral system, and that the sin and unhappiness, which have flowed, or may yet flow, from the wicked perversion by some moral agents of their freedom, may bear but a small proportion to the blessedness which

shall ultimately be secured by the exercise of the same freedom on the part of others—even as is believed, by the vast majority—in the way of holy action; and be on the whole therefore, not only the best possible system, but a grand and glorious one.

Indeed, there is nothing which militates against the supposition that the evils existing in the present system, may be but the *smallest fraction* compared with the aggregate amount of good which shall ultimately be secured by it.

This will abundantly appear in the exposition of the present theory. Still, the question comes up, why should there be *any* perversion of moral agency? and this point remains to be considered.

CHAPTER II.

THE MORAL SYSTEM AT PRESENT IN ITS INFANCY.

ARE other worlds besides ours peopled? Are the holy and the unholy angels and ourselves the only moral beings in existence, or are there multitudes of other moral beings? Are we standing at the dawn of the moral creation, or have countless ages rolled away since this work was commenced, during which it has been constantly progressing?

Here are two very different views presented, the latter more in accordance, perhaps, with the general belief, while there are reasons for the former which ought not to be overlooked.

Indeed, it is believed that the case may be so presented as to make the former the more plausible of the two.

In attempting this, some considerations may serve to establish only the bare possibility of the supposition; others may render it plausible; others, perhaps, probable; while *certainty*, in a matter so far above human reason, and respecting which the Bible is so nearly silent, is impossible.

1. The supposition that the moral system is at present in its infancy, and that the creation of moral beings has only just been entered on, involves no *intrinsic absurdity*. The first thought which arises in the mind accustomed to the opposite view, at the mention of such a supposition is, that it is simply absurd. The idea can not be entertained a moment, it is said, that all this vast universe, with the exception of our little world and the regions of Heaven and Hell, is one mighty solitude, unbroken, except by the transient presence of some celestial visitant.

But, be it remembered, there must have been a *beginning*. Taking the Bible for our guide, we can not believe in the eternity of matter, nor that any mind, except the Infinite, has

always existed. There must have been a beginning. Was matter or mind first created? We can not answer. One of two suppositions, however, must be true. The material universe was created to a certain extent, at least, before it was peopled, or peopled as fast as created. The former supposition is certainly not absurd, and is, perhaps, the more plausible of the two,—certainly not the less so; and therefore the supposition is not in itself absurd, that there have been, at some time, worlds which were not peopled. Why may there not be *now* worlds uninhabited? And if *some*, why not *many?* The supposition of a single uninhabited world involves as much antecedent improbability as that of many, or even that the entire universe, is, for the most part, as yet without inhabitants.

There is, therefore, no *intrinsic absurdity* in the idea that the moral system is yet in its infancy, and that other worlds are not yet peopled.

If the supposition, however, should still ap-

pear to any one wholly inadmissible, it will doubtless be owing to the fact, that he has been so long accustomed to an opposite view, rather than from any definite and well grounded *reason* for thus believing.

Let such a one still remember, that *there must have been a beginning*, and that as good reason exists for supposing that beginning to be the present time, as any former period, however remote.

Let him conceive the *physical* creation, even to be only in the incipient stages of its development,—that it was but yesterday, and space was a universal blank—the suns and systems of immensity having but just been called into being, and that the material universe, with all its present vastness, is only a drop to the ocean, compared with what it may be in the long ages of Eternity to come.

Space is limitless, and in it there may be an Eternity of Creation; and all that at present exists, may be only "the small dust of the balance," just sufficient to exhibit to the few

intelligent beings, who have already commenced their existence, the power and glory of God.

2. But it may be objected, perhaps, that the worlds about us, so far as we can ascertain anything respecting them, have a physical structure similar to our own—all, for instance, are subject to the same law of gravitation—all have their periodical revolution, and some, more nearly within our observation, are furnished with an atmosphere—and that reasoning from analogy, we should conclude they must, also, like our world, be inhabited.

But the simple supposition that they are *to be* peopled, and which forms a part of the present theory, as will be seen hereafter, as perfectly accounts for these peculiarities, as the supposition that they are *now* inhabited, and effectually removes this objection.

3. Is it objected that our race is too insignificant to be placed in so prominent a position, and that the conclusion to which it necessarily leads, that God's dealings with us, and our conduct under them, in short our entire history,

is to play an important part in the future unfoldings of creation, and to affect the happiness and welfare of all moral beings who may be hereafter created, is giving us a dignity and value which are not warranted by other indubitable marks of *inferiority*—as for instance, our frail, dying condition, the present limited range of our mental faculties; the fact also that we are tied down to a single inferior planet, and move like mere insects on its surface, and that our minds are cramped in a physical structure which allows them but a partial expansion?

Such may be man's estimate of the importance of his race. But not thus does God regard it. Turning to the Bible, we find that no higher distinction *can* be conferred on any race of beings than has been conferred on ours. We there learn that, in God's estimation, the race of man is so precious in his sight, that he gave his "Only Begotten Son" for their deliverance, and that the mightiest seraph in his immediate presence, still finds his happiness in ministering as a servant "for those who shall be

heirs of salvation;" while his towering intellect is bowed in humble and earnest enquiry into the great mystery of Redemption; "Which things the angels desire to look into."

Revelation teaches, also, that those who are finally saved from among men, will stand forever at the right hand of God as the place of peculiar distinction, and be the medium through which the moral splendor of his character is to be unfolded.

No *such* objection, then, can be regarded as of any weight.

4. There is nothing in the Bible *against* the supposition that the work of creating moral beings has but just commenced, and that the holy and unholy angels and ourselves, are all that have, as yet, been brought into existence.

5. The Bible mentions no other beings than these three orders, and alludes to no others either directly or indirectly. It alludes to God's creating the "*worlds*" by Jesus Christ, but makes no allusion whatever to their inhabitants.

6. The attention of *all* the angels in Heaven is centered on this world.

The apostle, in the first chapter of Hebrews, in showing the inferiority of the angels to the Great Saviour, is led incidentally to notice their employments, and thus discloses a fact of some importance to our present purpose. "Are they not," he says, "all (πάντες) ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." From which we learn that *all* the angels of Heaven are employed in ministering to the inhabitants of this world. It does not say that they may not be employed on missions to the inhabitants of other worlds, nor does the Bible furnish any, even the slightest intimation that they are, but *here*, we know they are all directly interested, and so much so that "there is joy in Heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth."

7. The energies of Hell are to a very great, and perhaps an equal extent, expended upon this world. Here, we know, at least, is the leader of the rebel angels, Satan, the "prince of the aerial host," working in the children of disobedience, and driving, with fiendish hate,

his schemes of mischief. Here, we know, too, are a great multitude, at least, of those who lost with him their first estate,—for aught that can be said to the contrary, *all.* They may be prosecuting a similar work of temptation elsewhere, but we have no reason whatever for thus believing.

The supposition, then, is, plausible if not probable, in the absence of all opposing evidence, that the present time is the dawn of the moral creation; that the great work of peopling this material universe, if not, the creation of the material universe itself, has but just commenced, and that God is now laying, as it were the foundation stones of that vast moral structure, which, in the coming ages of eternity shall be magnificent beyond conception.*

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* Since the above was written, a work of great ability has been issued from the English press entitled "The Plurality of Worlds;" in which the author endeavors to show, on scientific grounds, mainly, the probability that our world is the only one inhabited.

CHAPTER III.

ORDER OF CREATION.

Was matter or mind first created? As has been said, we can not answer with any degree of certainty. So far as there may be observed indications of *progress* in the unfolding of the universe,—and the general impression is, that there has been a steady advancement, in the process of creation, from a lower to a higher existence,—these would seem to favor the supposition that the *material universe* was first created.

Were the holy and the sinning angels created at the *same* time, or at *different* times?

Milton represents them as created at the same time, or, at least, as existing together, for a certain period, in holiness and happiness.

Both reason and Revelation are entirely silent upon the matter, and furnish not a particle of evidence in favor of either supposition.

In the absence of Scripture testimony, therefore, that supposition is ever to be regarded as the most reasonable, which will best harmonize with acknowledged facts, or remove existing difficulties.

In this view, the following will be adopted as being the probable order of creation.

First. That the *material system* was created, at least in part. As has been already intimated, we know of no limit to space, and can therefore set no boundaries to creation; and for aught we can say to the contrary, the universe of matter may yet be enlarged to that extent, that the myriads of worlds now in being will be but a drop to the ocean in comparison.

Secondly. "The angels who kept not their first estate."

Thirdly. Man. That any of the angels in Heaven were in existence when Adam was created, we have no evidence; and the supposition that they had not then been brought into being, is entirely admissible.

Indeed not the slightest intimation is given of them until after the Deluge; and even to the time of Abraham, God is ever represented as holding communication with man directly. And now as we know absolutely nothing respecting them *except* from Revelation, and up to this time the Bible makes no mention of them whatever, therefore the foregoing supposition is just as rational as any other which can be advanced.

The only passage which can be construed as in any way conflicting with this view, is Gen. 3 : 24, which speaks of the Cherubim placed at the east of the garden of Eden. There is no good reason, however, for supposing that either the Cherubim of the Old Testament or the ζῶα of the Apocalypse (Rev. 4 : 6–9, *living creatures*, improperly translated "*beasts*") have reference to finite, created beings, and that idea is now generally abandoned.*

* An elaborate article on the Cherubim of the sacred Scriptures will be found in Vol. VIII. of the Quarterly Christian

Fourthly. The angels who retained their allegiance, and are now happy in Heaven, and who, for reasons which will hereafter appear, may be regarded as the first successful experiment in the creation of moral beings and confirming them in holiness.

Spectator, in which the writer comes to the following conclusion.

"They were not angels. They are never spoken of as such. Nor are they represented either as angels or as designed to indicate real forms of life. The idea of an *angel*, therefore, at the entrance of the garden of Eden, is the idea of a philosophy, or the notion of the nursery; and without any foundation in the Scriptures."—Ch. Spec., Vol. VIII., p. 386.

CHAPTER IV.

OBEDIENCE TO HIMSELF, THE END IN GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

THE best thing conceivable is, that God should act, in all things, for the greatest good of himself and his universe, and that his intelligent creatures should do the same. To secure this action on the part of his creatures, God has given them his Law; and obedience to it is, therefore, the highest conceivable good, and disobedience to it, the worst conceivable evil.

1. There is no better thing conceivable than obedience to God.

Nothing can be so well pleasing to God himself; for it is an act of respect and homage due to himself from the beings he has made, in which they humbly recognize the relations he

sustains to them of Creator, Preserver and rightful Lawgiver.

Furthermore—There is nothing which tends so perfectly to promote the well-being of the subject who renders it. Whatever else might be true of him, the abiding conciousness that he was yielding his Maker a warm and hearty obedience, would be to him a perennial fountain of blessedness. And nothing else can produce equal happiness; for his relations to his Maker, and the position he occupies towards him, must, in the very nature of the case, be a matter of far greater importance to him, and of far deeper concern with him, than all things else; and to feel that these were in perfect accordance with the command and will of God, and therefore entirely satisfactory to him, must be accompanied with the conviction that "all things would work together for his good;" and in view of his position and prospects, fill him with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And then, again—It brings God and his crea-

tures into perfect harmony. God is ever seeking the highest good of all; and when the subjects of his government perfectly obey him, they also act from the same high and holy principle, and are drawn, therefore, into perfect unison with him. There is no jar whatever in their intercourse. They think and feel and act together.

Finally—It tends always, and in all respects, to promote the general good. If we could suppose obedience to God, in any case, *not* to be on the whole for the best, then a being ought not to render it, even though required of him; which shows at once the absurdity of the supposition.

Obedience to God, then, is always the best thing. No injury, in any case, can possibly result, on the whole, from obeying God's commands. It is best, on the whole, for every being in the universe, *to do just as God tells him to do.*

And, as the whole system is made up of individuals, so we may safely say, that the best conceivable *system*, is that, in which the

members of it all unite heartily with God in securing the general good — all acting together, and conforming their conduct alike to the same great principle of general benevolence.

And as God's law is always in accordance with the general good, so the best conceivable system is that in which there is rendered throughout implicit obedience to himself.

The complete prevalence of this, would diffuse the highest possible degree of happiness* throughout a universe of moral beings.

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* The idea sometimes advanced, that the redeemed in Heaven will be happier than the angels who have never sinned, seems entirely without foundation. They, indeed, may alone be able to learn the "new song," and as redeemed by the blood of Christ may be unspeakably dear to him, and from the fact of their illustrating the mercy and condescension of the Almighty, may occupy a peculiarly prominent position before the universe and play the noblest part in the future unfoldings of the moral system; but to say, that, in any case, the situation of a pardoned criminal, who has the wickedness of his rebellion ever to remember, is one more favorable for experiencing happiness than that of an obedient subject who has nothing to regret, is a violation of all our necessary conceptions of the laws of mental action.

There would be, there could be, nothing to mar its harmony, its beauty, its surpassing loveliness; and God would look upon it well pleased at beholding all things in accordance with his own holy and blessed requirements.

2. If this be true, then is it also true that there is no *worse* thing conceivable in the moral system than *disobedience* to God.

The *absence of the system itself*, and the consequent loss of all the vast amount of good which will ultimately result from it, may be a far greater calamity than the existence of the system with the amount of sin and consequent suffering in it, which will also exist; or in other words, it may be far better that there should be a moral system, even though it be to a certain extent defiled by sin, than there should be none at all; but, *in that system*, nothing is as bad as sin.

Nothing can be conceived, which, if carried out in its relations and consequences, would begin to equal it in mischief. There is nothing which so greatly insults and dishonors God, and robs him of the respect due to his author-

ity and government. There is nothing which tends so entirely to desolate the soul of him who commits it; nothing which throws him so utterly out of all harmony with his Maker; nothing which so completely deprives him of all peace; nothing which, in its very nature, so completely degrades and ruins him.

In relation to the government of God, it is rebellion against the constituted authority; an unwillingness to submit to it; a determination not to yield to its requirements. In each individual instance, therefore, it is of the nature of an effort to overturn the government, and which only wants numbers and strength sufficient, and the work would be accomplished.

Sin therefore, is a blow aimed at God; and as he is the great lawgiver, and obedience to his Law that which alone can secure the highest good of all, therefore it is also aimed through him, at the welfare of his entire universe.

This it is, which gives it its peculiarly dreadful character. So unspeakably important do we regard obedience to law, even in the limited

and imperfect governments of this world, and so disastrous the prevalence of rebellion, and so much to be dreaded the confusion and anarchy which inevitably result from it, that it has become a principle of universal acceptance, that Law must be sustained at all hazards; and that no possible infliction is to be regarded as unnecessarily severe, which is seen to be indispensable to securing its supremacy.

So on the loftier field of God's administration, there is nothing fraught with such awful consequences as contempt for his Law; nothing, which, if permitted to extend itself unchecked, would produce such wide-spread wretchedness,—such utter and unmitigated suffering. There is no conceivable fountain from which such awful streams of misery would flow, as from simple anarchy extending throughout the moral system of Jehovah. Even so dreadful is it, that any amount of suffering which it may be necessary to inflict in arresting its progress, can only be regarded as the merest dictate of benevolence. The *most*

dreadful thing conceivable is, that *God* should violate the eternal and immutable principles of moral rectitude, and next to this, that *his intelligent creatures* should do the same, by violating his law.

From the very constitution of things, therefore, which God has adopted, it appears, that the position he occupies is that of entire favor toward obedience, and of utter hostility to sin.

And his declarations in the Bible perfectly correspond. He has there declared himself to be "a God of truth and without iniquity" "loving righteousness," "righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works." Moreover, he is uniformly represented as arraying the whole force of his character and commands, and the sanctions of his Law, and indeed, the entire workings of his government, against transgression. "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness." "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity." "All that do unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord." "The wicked his soul hateth."

Furthermore, he aims against those who disobey him, the very thunders of his wrath. "His power and his wrath is against all that forsake him." "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies;" and at the Judgment, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," and they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." His Law, also, which is the expression of his Will, ever enjoins obedience and forbids transgression; and the whole tenor of the Scriptures leads to the conclusion, that nothing is regarded by the Almighty with so great a degree of approbation as holiness, and nothing with so great a degree of disapprobation as its opposite.

In respect, therefore, to the *end* which God has in view in the administration of his moral system, inasmuch as, on the ground of reason, his own glory must be the ultimate end of all

his action, and as nothing tends so much to glorify him and advance the general good as obedience to himself, and as nothing tends so much to dishonor him and interfere with general good as its opposite, and as the entire teachings of the Bible perfectly correspond to this,—it follows, that God would arrange *all things* in that system, with reference to securing the one and preventing the other; and we say, therefore, that the great end which God has in view in the administration of his government, and to which everything else must be subordinate and subservient, is, *obedience to himself.*

Certain conclusions seem inevitable.

1. If God *now* occupies this position, then he *always* occupied it; for any change in this respect, would involve a change of character, and he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

2. He therefore occupied this same position at the very *outset* of his moral administration, and arrayed himself *then* with the whole force

of his character, and the sanctions of his Law in favor of obedience, and made everything else subordinate and subservient to this one great end. Even then there appears no conceivable reason why, at that, or any subsequent period the Almighty, in giving proper expression to his own feelings of utter abhorrence at transgression, should not have taxed the universe for every possible influence which could properly be used to prevent its existence at the outset, or arrest its progress afterward.

3. Whatever element there may be in the nature of a moral being which has been the occasion of introducing sin into the moral system must be a *necessary* element of that nature, and absolutely inseparable from it—even indispensable to its existence; otherwise it would certainly have been dispensed with; at least, we have the same reason for thus believing, that we have for believing in God's unqualified hatred of rebellion.

The foregoing view is in perfect harmony, certainly, with the moral aspect in which God

has chosen to present himself before his universe, both by his Word, his Works and his Providence; while the opposite view, that he could readily have prevented sin, but chose in his Wisdom deliberately to allow its entrance into the moral system, is at variance with all our necessary conceptions of moral rectitude, and throws an utter inconsistency—one that admits of no *conceivable* explanation, into the entire character, conduct and declarations of Jehovah.

The objection that this view militates against the *omnipotence* of the Deity, will be considered elsewhere.

CHAPTER V.

PROBATION NECESSARY TO CONFIRMED OBEDIENCE.

As no better thing can be conceived than obedience and love to God—for nothing else so much glorifies him or advances the general good—so, as has been shown, we have every reason for supposing this to be the great end which he is aiming to secure on the part of all his intelligent creation. And this, not for a limited time, or to a partial extent, but fully, heartily and forever,—*i. e.*, their *confirmed* obedience.

Now a sort of love to God may exist, and a kind of obedience be rendered to him, which, after all, may be very far from implying or securing that settled and eternal obedience

which the welfare of the universe demands. For instance, God, revealed to me in no other aspect except as the author of the happiness I may be at the moment experiencing, would of course be regarded by me with satisfaction. God *merely* imposing upon me requirements which fall in perfectly with my natural inclinations would of course, unhesitatingly be obeyed; while there might still be an unwillingness either to love him or submit to him, should he, to a certain and necessary extent, *cross* my natural inclinations.

Thus, suppose God to present himself before any being newly created, as he did before Adam—claim to be his creator, and furnish him with conclusive evidence that he was such, as well as give him other existing evidences of his character, and thus lay him under moral obligation to obey him; and then demand of him something, either entirely, or very nearly, in accordance with his natural inclinations—as he did in giving Adam, previously to his fall, the law of marriage and the Sabbath, and the command to dress and keep the garden—then

undoubtedly, he would at once be obeyed, and even to a certain extent be regarded with affection, for the happiness which followed such obedience.

But we know that, in the case of Adam, such an act of obedience and such an emotion of love, could not have been regarded by God with so great a degree of satisfaction, as would the affection of one who was confirmed in holiness; for he knew, all the while, how weak within him was the *principle* of obedience, and that he was entirely unwilling to comply with *all* his reasonable commands. And furthermore, no such acts of obedience, *merely*, would have confirmed him in holiness; for they were very far from involving the requisite degree of submission to the Divine will; and a certain and proper amount of trial, as his conduct afterward showed, would have been sufficient, at any time, to induce him to abandon his Maker.

But what would have confirmed him?

The answer is—Had he not eaten of the

forbidden fruit, had he steadily refused, at *this* point, all solicitations to disobedience, both from his natural inclinations and the assaults of the tempter—in which case he would have resisted his natural inclinations, and *denied himself* at the command of God—*this* act of obedience, in *these* circumstances, would have required such an amount of self-denial, and would have involved such a degree of submission to the Divine will, as undoubtedly to have fortified him against all subsequent temptation, and therefore have confirmed him in obedience forever.

Our first parents, as they were situated in the Garden of Eden, are the only moral beings of whose earliest history we have any record: and reasoning from analogy, we may conclude it very possible, and perhaps probable, that *every* newly created being may need a similar probation; and that his entire course depends upon whether he can be induced, at the *outset* of his career, to practice a certain amount of self-denial at the command of his Maker. If he can be led, in any way, under a *fair trial* to

deny himself and *thus* to yield himself, to his Maker's control, then will he be confirmed in his obedience, and his eternal happiness be secured. But however many requirements of his Maker he may obey which do not at all, or only in a very slight degree, conflict with his natural inclinations, all these may afford no security whatever against his subsequent rebellion, in the circumstances in which the exigencies of the moral system may ultimately place him.

What these future exigencies may be, which would thus expose him to temptation, we have no means of knowing. It may be that, in the complicated relations which may hereafter exist in a universe of moral beings, there may be a liability to collision among themselves, and the general welfare be *thus* endangered; and a character firmly settled on the side of benevolence and holiness, be, on *this* account necessary. Or if this be deemed inadmissible, then, possibly, this whole matter is beyond the reach even of conjecture.

We have supposed the system yet in its infancy, and in the event of its being hereafter extended to all worlds, a multitude of occasions may unavoidably arise, in the progress of ages, and in the various relations and combinations which will eventually exist, of which we can now form no conception, to test severely the virtue of all God's moral creation; and with a direct view to this, it may be, and in anticipation of it, God may give every intelligent being, at the commencement of his existence, a particular period of probation, as an opportunity for him to become confirmed in obedience, that he thus encounter in safety whatever is before him, throughout eternity.

The object in imposing this trial at a comparatively *early period* in his history, may be twofold.

1. It may be a matter of certainty to the Divine mind, should such trial be omitted at the outset, and could a moral being, or any number of such, without it, be prevented from transgression for any definite time, however long, that sooner or later, there would result a far more

extended and disastrous rebellion, than if all such beings were tried at the *commencement* of their existence—or at least as soon as their knowledge of the character and attributes of God and their relations to him, had imposed upon them the necessary degree of moral responsibility.

2. At the outset of his career he may be more likely to pass the trial in safety.

It is not at all incredible, that, at any subsequent period, his relations to the universe might become more complicated, the obstacles within him and around him to his required submission to the Divine will, increased both in number and magnitude, and his entire position more unfavorable in all respects, for becoming confirmed in holiness. In this view, a trial at the outset, would seem to be the merest dictate of benevolence.

It is obvious, as has been already intimated, that the results of this probation must be decisive. If, at this turning point, the free moral agent resolves to obey God, his future character

will be settled on the side of holiness; and this determined resistance to sinful inducement, will lay broad and deep the foundations of his everlasting blessedness.

It follows, also, that if at this point he *disobeys* God, his future character will be determined toward unholiness and misery; and as sin tends ever to perpetuate itself, that there will be no hope of restoration to the forfeited favor of God, unless God interpose, as he has in this world, with a scheme of recovering grace.

The foregoing views may be regarded as plausible, or they may not. In respect to the reasons stated *why* probation may be necessary to confirmation in holiness, there is room for great diversity of opinion. But in regard to the simple *fact* of probation, it seems fair to reason from the case of Adam to that of all similar beings. As has been said, he is the only one of whose earliest history we have any record. For *some* reason he needed a probation—a test of obedience; and we can imagine no reason why he should need such a trial,

which would not be likely to exist in the case of every other moral being; and the conclusion seems not unfair, therefore, that for *some* reason, also, *all* such beings need a similar probation, and that without it, they can not be confirmed in obedience to God.

We conclude, therefore, from the foregoing considerations,

1. *That a probation involving a certain amount of trial, is probably necessary in order to confirm any and every moral being in obedience to God.*

2. *That under a system of mere law, such as we suppose to exist everywhere but in this world, the entire character and destiny of such a being, depends on his first moral act under a fair trial.*

3. If this be true, it would seem that the great problem in the moral system would be, to determine this first act of a moral being, under a fair trial, toward *obedience*. This point will be more fully considered hereafter.

CHAPTER VI.

MOTIVES.

SEC. 1.—*Motives the only controlling agency under mere Law.*

How can moral beings be controlled?

The only modes we know of, either from Reason or Revelation, in which the Divine agency is actually exerted in the control of moral beings, are Motives and the influences of the Holy Spirit.

The *former* are derived from three sources—God's own declarations, (in our world the truth of the Bible)—the works of nature, and the dealings of Providence.

The *latter*, so far as employed to produce in such beings obedience to God, appear to be exerted simply to give efficacy to these motives—

to lead the subject to act in view of them when otherwise he would not. In the language of the Bible, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," "shines in the heart," "opens the heart," "convinces of sin," &c.; by which, we suppose, is meant, that he enlightens the intellect, quickens the sensibilities, softens prejudices, produces candor, awakens sorrow in view of transgression, and finally secures obedience to the dictates of conscience and the commands of God, where at first, it had been withheld.

But the Scriptures uniformly represent the Spirit as acting *only* in connexion with truth or motive of some kind, in order to give it efficacy; and we have no reason for supposing it to be exerted in any other way, or for any other purpose; and, therefore, we know of no way in which God exerts his power to lead *men* to love and obey him, except through motives and the Spirit's influences to give them efficacy.

But, secondly—So far as we can learn from the Bible, the peculiar influences of the Holy

Spirit are a part of that scheme of grace and mercy, which has been devised for the recovery of the sinful in this world through an atonement; as says the Apostle, "which he shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ;*" (Tit., 3: 6.) and there is no reason for supposing that it can, properly, be exerted elsewhere. Indeed, under a system merely of law, such as we suppose existed previous to the atonement, it might have no proper place whatever; for under a system of *mere* law, maintained over intelligent moral beings who understand the perfect reasonableness of the requirements made of them, and who feel fully the obligations they are under to *obey* them, and who clearly see the justice of punishment for rebellion,—under such a system, to bring in any *extraneous* influence, like that of the Holy Spirit for instance, to induce obedience, might only tend to weaken the influence of law over them, and eventually undermine the entire authority of the government.

To illustrate—Suppose a father to lay some

command upon his child; and then, instead of enforcing the command by the simple weight of his authority, suppose he should bring in some extraneous influence to secure obedience. He should offer him an orange. What is the consequence?

First. He weakens his authority and impairs his influence over his child.

Secondly. Obedience could probably be secured a second time, in similar circumstances, only by means of some additional inducement.

Thirdly. This method of procedure continued, would result in the confirmed and hopeless rebellion of the child against all parental restraint.

So in the government of God. Under a system of mere law, to bring in some extraneous influence to secure obedience to his commands, might only tend to weaken the influence of Law, and lead ultimately to rebellion. Or if no evil consequences should follow to those directly influenced, still, the knowledge of the

fact, disseminated through the universe, that God was *thus* securing the obedience of his creatures, might undermine the foundations of government elsewhere.

In respect to this world, as the majesty of Law has here been first sustained by an Atonement, such a result can not be apprehended. Away from this world, such a measure might be attended only with evil consequences to the entire system.

Moreover, so far as we can learn both from Reason and the Scripture, the peculiar influences of the Holy Spirit are employed to enlighten the intellect and quicken the sensibilities, which have become darkened and deadened by transgression, and so remove the obstructions which *man* has thus accumulated in his own pathway to heaven, and thus "persuade and enable him to embrace Jesus Christ." And without these influences, his blindness and insensibility to the power of holy motive, would continue forever. For by transgression, man has, in the language of the Scripture, "destroyed" himself—has his "understanding

darkened"—is "alienated from God, through blindness (margin *hardness*) of heart" and is even "past feeling," and he needs help from the Almighty to recover himself from his degradation and ruin.

But it does not appear that any such help would be needed in the case of one who had never sinned, and who retained, therefore, that perfection of natural constitution with which he came from the hand of God. And, certainly, if any possible impartation of light, or knowledge, or sensibility, would keep his moral creatures from transgression, God would not fail to impart it. As one who loves holiness and hates sin, he would withhold *nothing* from them which would tend to secure their moral purity; and we have every reason to suppose, therefore, would give them at the outset, all possible clearness of apprehension and delicacy of sensibility—or at least, all that would have any tendency to bind them to a life of obedience.

There is no reason, therefore, for supposing

that, *beyond this world*, any influence can properly be brought to bear upon moral beings to bind them in affectionate obedience to God, but that of *simple motive*.

It may be absolutely necessary, that having created them in the best possible manner, that is with such a degree of clearness, strength and comprehensiveness of intellectual perception, and such keen and varied sensibilities, and such a balance of mental faculties every way, as would be most likely to result in their continued obedience to himself, and tend every way to glorify him if employed aright, in short created them "in his own image;" and having placed them in circumstances best adapted to develop a perfect moral character, and brought them under the influence of all exising motives to obedience—that then, God should leave them to form their own moral characters by their own free conduct under the influence of these simple motives; and that the exertion of any power or influence beyond this, emanating directly from God himself, would be entirely inconsistent with the circumstances of the case,

inconsistent with the majesty of law, with the stability of government, and with the entire welfare of the moral universe.

Is it said that God has *Power* to do anything and everything? Certainly, anything proper to be accomplished by the exertion of power. But the exertion of that power must always be limited by wisdom. God must ever act in perfect consistency with his own nature, and with the nature he has given to his works; for the contrary supposition would involve *self*-inconsistency. Thus, he can not deal with mind as with matter, for the simple reason that he has seen fit to give them different natures. If he has made mind such a thing, that, in certain circumstances, it can properly be controlled by nothing but *motive*, then in those circumstances, he *must* use nothing but motive in the control of it. If the moral system of which he is the author, and which is the best possible system, is yet such a one, that, in certain circumstances, to bring in any extraneous influence, like that of the Holy Spirit, to secure the obedience of his subjects, will only weaken the

influence of his authority, and eventually lead to a wider spread and more disastrous rebellion than would otherwise exist, then in those circumstances, he certainly *must* exert no such influence. This is merely saying, in each of these instances, that God must act in perfect consistency with the constitution of things which, in his infinite wisdom and benevolence, he has seen fit to adopt;—that in the government of his moral universe, there are certain fixed principles to which he must ever adhere, and which can not be violated, without involving *self*-inconsistency, and a sacrifice of the highest good.

As we know, therefore, of no other means which God has ever made use of to govern moral beings, except motives and the influences of the Holy Spirit, and as the latter appertain, so far as we know, only to the economy of this world, therefore, there is no reason for supposing, that, under a system of mere law, such as we have every reason to think existed previous-

ly to the atonement, moral beings could have been controlled by anything but *simple motive.*

Sec. 2.—*Particular motives necessary to secure obedience.*

So far as we can analyze the nature of a moral being, and draw conclusions from the workings of it under our own observation, two things appear absolutely necessary to secure permanent obedience to law, namely, *the fear and love of the Lawgiver.*

First. So far as we know, hearty and unconditional submission to the requirements of law, can never be secured without the *fear* of the Lawgiver.

We see this strikingly exemplified in the workings of human society. Even the village school can not be properly managed, until the conviction is settled in the minds of the pupils, that disobedience is unsafe, and that the threatened penalty will certainly be executed. And it is a well known fact, that no exhibition of kindness, patience, and love, on the part of the

teacher, will be able to win their affectionate obedience, while the impression remains that he is wanting in the firmness necessary to punish transgression.

So in the government of the family, and of the state, the same principle prevails. The moment the proper subjects of law believe, whether for good reason or not, that there is a want of *firmness* in the constituted authority to punish disobedience as it deserves, that moment affectionate obedience will cease to be rendered. They will despise its pusillanimity more than they will love its good-will; it will fall into merited contempt, and rebellion will sooner or later be sure to follow. A government must be *feared* or it will neither be obeyed nor even respected.

And undoubtedly, for this reason, God in the administration of his Moral Government here in this world, is so constantly revealing himself in a fearful aspect.

The earthquake, that buries whole cities, and which can not be intended for the personal

good of their inhabitants, for it gives them no time for Repentance or Reformation,—the hurricane that sweeps away the habitations of men, or the fire that devours them,—the pestilence that marks its deadly pathway over a continent,—and the bolt from heaven that prostrates the form of manhood, or strikes the infant in its mother's arms, are each and all the manifestations of God. Moreover, his terrible threatenings against transgressors, the doom of the fallen angels, and of the incorrigibly wicked from this world, and all the fearful declarations of the Bible respecting sinners, are God's own exhibition of himself before his creatures; in which, he not only reveals himself in a fearful aspect, but *in the most fearful one conceivable;* and the impression which these are adapted to make,—one which they *do* make, and which therefore God *designs* they shall make upon them, is, that he is a *fearful* being, one who can not be trifled with, with impunity; one who is to be reverenced, and to whom it becomes them, if for no reason than the fear of consequences, to render an unhesitating obedience.

This great lesson the Psalmist had learned, and from the contemplation of God's dealings was led to exclaim in the fullness of his awe-struck soul, "O Lord who shall not *fear* thee!" Our Saviour, also, endeavored to fix the same impression deeply upon the minds of those whom he was instructing.

"Be not afraid," he says, "of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." The *fear*, therefore, of the constituted authority, is what lies at the foundation of all successful government. But,

Secondly. An appeal to fear, alone, will never secure anything more than a *temporary* obedience. The Lawgiver who undertakes to enforce obedience *only* by fear, with little or no manifestation of affection and good-will toward his subjects, becomes in their apprehension a tyrant; and the hatred engendered

by this conviction, will sooner or later terminate in open rebellion. And therefore—

Thirdly. In order that hearty obedience may be secured on the part of the governed, there must be an appeal to *affection* as well as fear. The administrator of government must convince those under his control that he has their best welfare at heart, and must give evidence of his affectionate interest, before he can receive affection in return. Love manifested begets love; and, furthermore, where the firmness and truthfulness of the Lawgiver *are fully believed in*, no manifestation of kindness, tenderness and love, can be *too great.* Even the greater such a manifestation is, in these circumstances, the more fully will it tend to develope affection on the part of the governed. Illustrations of this truth might be multiplied to almost any extent; for the entire workings of human society accord with it.

And we find, that, in the moral government of God, there is ever an appeal to this motive also. Not only is God revealing himself in a terri-

ble aspect, but he is also manifesting traits of tenderness and love, of warm and hearty friendship for the creatures he has made; and therefore, Paul, when standing on the top of Mars Hill, and preaching to those who had derived their knowledge of God only from the light of nature, could yet give them abundant reason why they should exercise toward him feelings of gratitude and affection, "in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;" and the head and front of their offending, as he says in another place, was, that, "when they *knew* God," *knew* how well worthy he was of their esteem, "they glorified him not as God neither were *thankful*."

Furthermore, the giving of his "only begotten and well beloved Son," for the salvation of a sinful world, is one of the strongest appeals to affection which ever has been made, or ever can be,—it is even *the strongest conceivable.*

In all successful government, therefore, there must be an appeal to affection as well as fear.

In fact, unless there was good and sufficient proof of the Benevolence of the Lawgiver, and that he was actuated by a desire for the best good of all, there could be no moral obligation to respect his government.

These two classes of motives in *combination* also, are often held up in the Scriptures, by way of giving a harmonious exhibition of the Divine character.

As for instance, in Rom. 11 : 22. "Behold therefore the *goodness* and *severity* of God." So in Rom. 9 : 22, 23. "What if God willing to show his *wrath*, and to make his power known, endured," &c. "And, that he might make known *the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.*" Here, it will be seen, is the clear declaration, that God did what he did, to make a public manifestation of his character in these two aspects of *severity* and *tenderness;* and doubtless, because this twofold exhibition was so essentially necessary to secure the obedience of his creatures—on the one hand *showing his wrath*, and on the other *making known his mercy.*

It is not true, however, that such appeals will always be successful. Both fear and love, may be appealed to, to a certain extent, and yet not produce the desired result.

The subjects of law may have good and sufficient reason to believe in the ability and determination of the Lawgiver to punish transgression as it deserves, and yet not be deterred by it from disobedience. Furthermore, they may have good and sufficient reason to believe in his benevolence and good-will,—his ability and inclination to secure the highest good, and yet not be won by it to obedience. The desire for self-indulgence, and the impatience of restraint, may be so strong, that, neither the influence of fear, nor the claims of affection, nor both combined, will be sufficient to deter the subject from determining on a course of rebellion. Illustrations of this are often seen in the conduct of an ungrateful and disobedient child. Such was the conduct of the fallen Angels, and of our First Parents, and such has been the conduct of every sinner against God in the universe.

And yet, as these motives admit of increase to an indefinite extent, as will be seen hereafter, it is possible, and perhaps probable, that they may be so increased, as eventually to secure the obedience of all moral beings who come under their influence.

Sec. 3.—*Derivation of Motives.*

So far as we can see, motives to the love and service of God, can only be derived from the knowledge which a moral being has of God's existence, character and relations to himself. Manifestly, if he were entirely ignorant of him, he could exercise toward him no feelings whatever. If he merely knew of his natural attributes, and modes of existence, there would, then, be no reason for loving him. And it is not until he comes to the knowledge of his character for Benevolence, and his relations to himself as Creator, Preserver and rightful Lawgiver, that the feeling of obligation to love and serve him, *can* be awakened in his mind.

1. *How can he acquire this knowledge?*

As it respects the existence and character of God, it does not appear that he could arrive at the knowledge of these, unless there had been some manifestation of them in external action.

The idea that God could reveal himself to the being he has made, while there had been no external exhibition of himself,—that he could, for instance, *create* evidence respecting himself in the mind, independently of all external evidence,—or that he could disclose his existence, character, and attributes to the mental perception, by coming in some way into direct contact with it, without any *medium* of manifestation, may be inconsistent with the nature of a finite being.

True, God himself needs no such manifestation of conduct on the part of his creatures, to arrive at the knowledge of *their* characters, for he looks directly at the heart, and needs not, as man does, an "outward appearance" to reveal its secrets, and gains, even, from their conduct, no *additional* impression respecting the feelings and principles within. But, there

is no reason for supposing that a finite being can thus be made to apprehend the Infinite Jehovah,—can thus be made to "know him," to look directly at *his* character, and so fully to apprehend him, as to gain from the manifestation of himself in his Word, Works, and Providence, no additional impression.

On the contrary, it would seem that the finite could only apprehend the finite; and that the Infinite, could only be revealed to the finite, through the medium of finite forms.

Were it not so,—if the finite can be made to apprehend the Infinite, as perfectly, without any medium of manifestation as with it, then, evidently, the impression which has thus far been made upon the universe, respecting God's character and attributes, by his dealings with moral beings, both in the way of judgment and mercy, could as well have been made without such dealings; and the entire mass of motives, now existing to the love and service of God, both in nature and extent, have been brought into existence by the simple energy of

creative power. Then might the same impression of God's justice have been made upon the universe, without the punishment of the rebellious, and the same impression of his mercy have existed, had no Saviour ever hung upon the cross; and, therefore, a full illustration of the Divine Character have been secured, with no expenditure of suffering, either by the Redeemer or the lost; and, therefore, for the great purposes of moral government, these sufferings are all unnecessary, and have been, and are to be endured, for some unknown and unimaginable object. But, this is, most manifestly, an unwarrantable assumption, if not an utter absurdity.

One thing, at least, is certain. We know of no instance in which God *has* revealed himself, except through some *medium* of manifestation; or required any belief respecting his existence and character, except so far as these had been exhibited in *action;* or made any demand of obedience, except so far as there was *external evidence which could be appealed to*, that such demand was both reasona-

ble and proper. And, as neither reason nor observation, furnish any proof that a revelation of God, in any other way, is consistent or possible, it follows that such a manifestation may be absolutely necessary in the nature of things; and that a finite being can be made acquainted with God, only as he is revealed to him in the way he has been, by means of an external manifestation.

2. *How is this manifestation made*

The knowledge of God's existence, character and relations to his creatures, appears to be derived from three sources only.

His own Declarations, (in our world, the truth of the Bible;) the works of Nature,—and the dealings of Providence. If any other methods of Revelation are possible, we are entirely unacquainted with them. So far as we can see, all knowledge of God, and all existing motives to his love and service, are derived simply from his Word, Works, and Providence.

1. His Word. From this may be learned all those particulars respecting himself, which he chooses to communicate.

And, while his veracity is unimpeachable, and there is good and sufficient evidence of his general benevolence, his declarations ought ever to be received by his creatures, in any and all circumstances, as of the highest possible authority. Whatever he affirms must be implicitly received as true, and cordially and thankfully welcomed, as being an emanation from the great fountain of all truth and wisdom.

His own declarations, therefore, respecting himself, have ever been, and must ever be, one of the great sources from which his creatures derive their knowledge of his character and attributes.

And, furthermore, every moral being from first to last eternity, must be under the highest possible *obligations* to accept as true whatever declarations he may make respecting himself, and to act accordingly. And, when he gives his Law, and imposes the trial of obedience, and represents the eternal rewards which will follow allegiance, and the dreadful retribution which will inevitably result from transgression,

he should not doubt in the least that God will be true both to his promises and his threatenings.

2. His Works. These corroborate the truth of his declarations, and furnish additional and conclusive evidence of the Power, Wisdom and Benevolence which he claims for himself.

His Power and Wisdom, are abundantly manifested in the material worlds, rising from nothing at his simple will,—moving in harmony, clothed in beauty, and filled with numberless exhibitions of design and adaptation.

The same things may be learned also by each individual being, from his own wonderful constitution, the curious combination of his mental powers and faculties, and perhaps the union of all with some exquisitely constructed frame, some vehicle of spiritual manifestation; in the case of other intelligences than man, perhaps a something not unlike that which the apostle characterizes by the paradoxical epithet of the "spiritual body."

From his own susceptibility to enjoyment, and the ten thousand avenues opened for its

gratification, as well as the happiness experienced by the lower orders of the animal creation, may he gain a most impressive conviction of the Divine Benevolence; while the consciousness of a moral power within,—a conscience enthroned, and the workings of the free will, laying the foundation of responsible action, will invest the Creator, in his apprehension, with the same high attributes, and make him, not merely the intelligent architect, but the Moral Governor.

3. His Providence. Understanding by this his dealings with his intelligent creation, and it is a source of motive to the love and service of the Creator, different, in many respects, from either of the others. Like them, it furnishes impressive evidence respecting the character and attributes of God, but unlike them, *can have no existence at the commencement of a moral administration.* Obviously, no illustration of God's Power, Wisdom, or Benevolence, can be derived from his dealings with his creatures before they have had existence; while it is equally obvious, that, as these deal-

ings are multiplied, the evidence respecting his character must be continually increasing, and with it, the motives to obedience.

There seems, also, to be a something in the illustration of God's character from the workings of his Providence, which, in its very nature, is more strongly adapted to move a moral being, and influence him to right action, than any influence derived either from his Word or his Works.

It does not appear for instance, that any mere declarations of his, *could* speak so impressively to the soul, and awaken so strongly within it the conviction that God was a fearful and terrible being, as the actual execution of his threatened penalty upon the transgressor, of his Law; nor that any declarations, or works of his, could make so powerful an appeal to affection, as the exhibition of his mercy in the Redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ. But, this two-fold exhibition of himself, in the punishment and salvation of sinners, appealing with the greatest conceivable power, on the one hand to fear, and on the other to affec-

tion, and which, as has been shown in *Section Second* of this chapter, has such an important influence in actually securing obedience to God,—belongs exclusively to the dealings of his Providence, and could not, in the nature of things, exist at the commencement of a moral administration.

In respect to this general topic, nothing is more plainly taught in the Bible, than that God is making use of his varied dealings with his moral universe in the way of judgment and mercy, for the MANIFESTATION OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

To recur to a few passages, some of which have been already quoted.

Rom, 9: 22. "What if God, willing to *show* his wrath and to *make* his power *known*," &c., in which the statement plainly is, that God, in his treatment of the "vessels of wrath," is desiring and seeking to exhibit his "power," and to manifest his "wrath," that is, his displeasure against sin; thus bringing out to view the sterner elements of his character as the great Moral Governor.

Again, Rom. 9 : 23. "And that he might *make known* the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy," &c.; where the statement is, also, equally plain, that God is making use of his treatment of redeemed and sanctified men, for the *manifestation* of himself in the opposite way, and bringing to view his character as a being of paternal tenderness and compassion even for the sinful.

Again, Eph. 3 : 10. "To the intent, that, now, unto the principalities and powers in Heavenly places, *might be known* by the church, the manifold wisdom of God;" where the statement is still more explicit, namely that God is manifesting his character, by means of his dealings with his redeemed church, to the *angels in Heaven.*

Again, Eph. 2 : 7. "That in the ages to come he might *show* the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus;" where the statement is equally explicit, that God will make use of his redeemed church *forever* in manifesting forth the perfections of his character. From these declara-

tions it plainly appears, that the work of manifesting the character of God, is steadily going forward by means of his dealings with his intelligent creatures.

But here the great question arises—What *end* is to be secured by so wonderful a manifestation? Must it not have been designed for some very important purpose? We should certainly believe thus; for in God's plan of operation there must ever be a perfect correspondence between means and ends, so that the one shall be every way worthy of the other. God will never expend too *much* in securing an object. But must not the object then be one of the greatest conceivable magnitude? Certainly, if it correspond to the expenditure; for no greater expenditure could even Omnipotence incur than to give the only-begotten Son of God for human redemption and salvation. No greater exhibition of tenderness and love could have been made than this, and no greater proof have been given of the terrible reluctance with which God, as a being of infinite goodness and benevolence, dooms the

creatures he has made to receive the just penalty of their sin. And there is no more fearful manifestation *possible* of his regard for Law, his hatred of transgression, and his firmness in punishing it, than was made when he "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell;" and than appears, still, in his threatenings of "everlasting punishment" against the incorrigibly wicked of this world. Now can any end be conceived of sufficient magnitude to warrant such an expenditure—such a sacrifice, except that of *securing obedience to Law on the part of his moral creation?* If so, what is it? The question is one difficult, if not impossible to be answered; and, therefore, this great object—in the very nature of things, that which he must love above all others, in his relations to his creatures*—is, in all probability, *the one* which God is thus aiming to secure.

But, has his character received such a manifestation at any previous time? Has it ever *before*, been thus made known? The most

* See Part I., Chap. 4.

plausible assumption is, that it has not. Indeed, if it be accepted as true that the moral creation has but just commenced, and that the holy and unholy angels and man, are all who have as yet been brought into existence, then such a manifestation *could not* have before been made. And *if* God is using it to secure obedience to himself,—and no one can prove he is not,—then the *absence* of it, may be the reason why obedience has not been rendered on the part of his intelligent creatures; in other words, this may be the reason WHY SIN EXISTS. This point will be more fully considered in the following chapter.

If the foregoing reasoning be valid, some important conclusions are reached.

1. It may be impossible in the nature of things, for motives to the love and service of God to be created and placed before the minds of moral beings, except as his character is manifested in *external action.* Therefore,

2. The more full and varied such a manifestation is, the more numerous and weighty will

be the motives to such love and service. Therefore,

3. At the commencement of a moral administration, such motives can not, in the nature of the case, be as numerous and weighty as at a subsequent period, when the dealings of his providence with his creatures have been for a long time accumulating. Therefore,

4. The position of *moral beings*, created at the outset of such an administration, can not be as favorable for actually securing their confirmed obedience, as that of those created at a later period; or, at least, the latter will have all the additional motives pressing on them to love and serve God, which have been created by his dealings with the former. Therefore,

5. This *may* be the reason why some moral beings have sinned and others not, namely that while all the motives which the universe furnished at the commencement of the present system, may have been insufficient to restrain the first moral beings from rebellion, the subsequent *increase* of motives, derived from God's observed dealings with them, in the way of

justice, and with the redeemed and sanctified from this world, in the way of mercy, illustrating, therefore, both "the goodness and severity of God," may have been sufficient to confirm those in obedience who are now happy in Heaven.

6. The reason why Christ, *regarded as man*, "made in all things like unto his brethren," and "tempted in all points like as they are," was yet "without sin," may have been, that, from his intimate union with the Father, he knew perfectly the character of God, and understood fully the heights and depths of the Divine justice and mercy which he came himself to illustrate.

7. It would appear, that, if rebellion against God is to be prevented from extending itself through the universe forever, its progress must be arrested by the *increase of motives;* and, furthermore, that the supposition of its being thus arrested, is not at all improbable, seeing that motives have already received such a vast increase from the punishment of the rebel

angels, and the work of Redemption, and are accumulating with such wonderful rapidity, by the constant and varied manifestation of God's character in his dealings with the moral universe.

8. It is not at all improbable that the great end at which the entire arrangements of the universe are at present aimed, may be *that development of the Divine Character which shall be sufficient, hereafter, to determine the action of all newly created beings, under the trial of Probation, toward obedience and submission.*

CHAPTER VII.

ORIGIN OF SIN.

WHAT possible inducement can exist for a pure and perfect being to transgress the commands of God, and refuse to act in accordance with the general good! That a liability to sin from *some* cause exists in the case of such a one, is evident from the fact, that such have sinned; and there must have been a previous liability to that which has actually transpired.

What can it be? A *possible* answer may be found in the following considerations.

1. It is probable that the desire for happiness—for enjoyment, and for the immediate possession of every object which can minister to it, especially of perfect freedom in the pursuit of it, *enters as a necessary element into the constitution of every moral being*, so that

without it, he could not be a moral being. It is perfectly innocent in itself, and, indulged to a certain extent, produces only the good of its possessor, and, moreover, if only properly gratified, is undoubtedly capable of securing the highest possible degree of happiness throughout a universe of moral beings.

In proof of this,

First,—We know of no such being who is without it.

Secondly,—We can form no conception of a moral nature in which it does not exist.

The very thing which distinguishes the moral above the brute creation, is, that the former possesses the power of free, voluntary action between the desire of happiness, in the way of *present* gratification on the one hand, and the dictates of reason on the other. Take away either of these, and what we term *moral* action is impossible. Deprive a being of reason and conscience, and it sinks him at once to a level with the brute. Take away the desire of present happiness,—of immediate enjoyment, and the desire of possessing the objects which min-

ister to it, and there remains only a cold, intellectual abstraction,—a being devoid of sympathy, and with no room for the working of a self-approving conscience; and acting rightly—if the action of such a one could properly be termed *right*—from the sheer force of a physical necessity;—acting rightly because there was no other possible way of acting. In either case, the moral nature is ruined, and the happiness of conscious virtue impossible.

Thirdly,—In the case of our first parents—the only example of *created* beings, with the workings of whose minds, in their original purity and perfection, we have any acquaintance—we find the same constitutional desire for enjoyment from objects immediately present to the mind.

To meet and gratify it, "the Lord God planted a *garden* eastward in Eden," and there grew in it "every tree that was *pleasant to the sight*, and good for food," and their desire of self-gratification must have extended to every object in the garden capable of satisfying it;

even to partaking of the forbidden fruit, when it had been represented by the Tempter as good and desirable. And this very principle of their natures, the Tempter made use of for their destruction. He first took off, in a measure, the restraint which God had imposed upon it, by declaring to them, "Ye shall *not* surely die;" and then awakened it into new life and activity, by representing the forbidden fruit as that which should make them "as gods knowing good and evil;" and the woman followed its promptings, and took and ate the fruit, as is stated, *because* she saw that it was "good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."

Fourthly,—The Lord Jesus Christ, in the purity and perfection of his nature, had the same constitutional desire for enjoyment, and for the possession of every object which could minister to it, and remained pure and sinless, only because he uniformly kept it in due subjection, and refused to gratify it except in accordance with the highest good; for he was "in *all points* tempted like as we are."

Furthermore, the Scriptures unequivocally declare that "Christ pleased not himself." Consequently he had an element in his moral constitution prompting him to self-gratification; and it was necessary for him to restrain it, and to practice self-denial, in order to obey God perfectly. *Had* he pleased himself, and followed the promptings of natural inclination, he would have sinned. And if this constitutional desire for self-gratification, and which needed restraint, existed in the Lord Jesus, then doubtless it exists as an inseparable element in the nature of all moral beings.

Such an element, God even claims for himself, when he says, "He doth not afflict *willingly*." Therefore by just so much as he is unwilling to afflict, must he repress the immediate promptings of his benevolent nature to remove the suffering, and govern himself rather by a superior regard for the highest good of his universe. Again, he is "*not willing* that any should perish;" and by just so much as he is not willing, must he repress the

strong impulses of affection for the creature he has made; and because the higher interests of his universe demand the maintenance of his Law and Government inviolable, must he punish him as he deserves.

Should it be asked why, in this view, God is not tempted to wrong action, and why the above representation of him does not conflict with the declaration that "God can not be tempted with evil," the answer is, that in temptation, the choice presented before the mind, is ever between an inferior *present* gratification and a superior *future* good; and the mind is the more strongly affected by that which is immediately present to it, and of which it is *almost* in possession; and is inclined therefore to prefer it to that which is future, and of which it can not come into immediate possession. But before the mind of the Omniscient One, the present and the future rise with equal distinctness, and with equal power to influence. He takes in at a glance the entire system of things from first to last eternity, and

understands it in all its parts, relations, and dependencies, and has adopted it *as a whole;* and though there may be in the elements of his nature an unwillingness that any should suffer, yet in its strongest promptings, it can not in the least incline him to sacrifice the general good, which is ever *as* distinctly before his mind and in full view of which he must ever act, and therefore it can never become, as in finite beings, a temptation to wrong moral action; so that notwithstanding the element, which he claims for himself in the passages above cited, it still remains true, that he "*can not* be tempted with evil."

Should it be asked further, why, then, the future and present should not be placed before the minds of *all* moral beings with the same distinctness as before the mind of God, the answer is,—That *infinite* powers can not be imparted to a finite being, and no one, but the Infinite Jehovah, *can* have all things, past, present and future, equally present to his mind.

Should it be asked again,—Why then the

finite being is under obligation to act rightly, having only this limited view of things, the answer is,—It is all which, in the nature of things, he *can have.*

But, furthermore, in the circumstances in which he is placed, he has *good* and *sufficient* reason for believing in God's perfections, and obeying all his commands; and we can not see why, in all cases, good and sufficient reason for a certain course of action, should not impose a full and perfect ground of moral obligation for pursuing it; nor why there should not exist, therefore, on the part of every moral being, a full and perfect obligation to love, serve and obey God; nor how any responsibility can rest on the Almighty for the sins of his creatures, when he places them *in the best possible circumstances for securing their confirmation in holiness.* The prosecution of these inquiries involves the entire question of the Freedom of the Will; on which it does not comport with the design of the present work to enter.

In this view of his moral constitution, the

general attitude of a subject of God's government seems to be this. On the one side is the Law of God, whose meaning is understood by the reason, and whose authority the judgment decides to be rightful. On the same side, is the conscience, laying in the bosom of the subject the foundation of future remorse or self-approval, and already anticipating the thrill of pleasure, or the burden of woe, which will follow obedience or disobedience. To secure right action, come in also, on the same side, the appeals to fear and affection, which have been noticed—the fear of threatened consequences, and the claims of gratitude. All these urge to obedience.

On the other side, is the desire of present gratification, immediate pleasure,—the claims of self-indulgence; and *between* these stands the free, moral and responsible being, under the same obligation to act rightly that his Maker is; and in case he does wrong, and rejects the binding authority of reason and conscience, committing an act, second only in awfulness, both as it respects its nature and

influence, to a departure from moral rectitude on the part of God himself;—and well may it be said to him, "Be ye therefore perfect *even as* your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." "Be ye holy, FOR I am holy."

2. *But why should not natural desires be gratified to their full extent?* Because, it be replied, there are strong reasons for supposing, that the unrestrained gratification of these would be injurious both to the *individual* and *general* welfare.

First,—It is very possible that such an unlimited indulgence of even innocent propensities, as he naturally craves,—such an unrestrained gratification of his inclinations as he would naturally delight in, might result in his *personal* injury. They may be, as has been said, perfectly innocent in themselves, and gratified to a certain extent, may be productive only of his highest happiness, as similar desires were in the Saviour. But there is possibly a limit to that gratification; and beyond that limit, the natural desires may need to be re-

strained, even in a being who has not sinned; as, for instance, the natural appetite for food in physical beings, which, while properly gratified, is only a source of pleasure, yet needs to be restrained, to prevent injury to the physical system.

But, secondly—It is possible that such natural desires need restraint especially, for the welfare of moral beings in their *social* relations. It is, indeed, very conceivable, that myriads of such beings existing together, and each engaged in the pursuit of his own happiness, might, without such regulation and restraint, come into the most disastrous collision. The same object, for instance, or the same situation, might be capable of affording equal enjoyment to many individuals, and each, therefore, by the necessities of his natural constitution, equally desire its possession; and when natural *desires* have thus come into conflict, why should not the *beings themselves* be liable to collision.

The liability seems unavoidable, unless all were willing to surrender their freedom, and

sacrifice their individual and personal pleasure to the general welfare. And so far as we can see, such sacrifice is absolutely necessary to the well-being of any community. The general good must ever be the paramount object of consideration, and no private or personal good, however desirable, can rightly be suffered, for a moment, to come into competition with it. And, as God, in his omniscience, only knows or can know what particular course of conduct will in all cases secure the general good, so it seems equally necessary, that all moral beings should surrender their independence entirely, and submit their desires and inclinations unconditionally to *his control*, and make his Law the rule of action, and consent to be guided, governed, and *restrained*, as Infinite Wisdom may see fit, as the only possible security against their own personal injury, and the anarchy of the entire moral creation.

Should the question be asked why a being should have desires *implanted* in him, which thus need restraint, the answer is,—Such a one

is the best kind of being; even he is made after God's own image, than which there can be no better pattern.

3. In the next place it is possible that *a voluntary submission to such restraint, may require a great amount of self-denial*, even in a being who has never sinned, and may, therefore, be a very difficult matter for any and every such one, as he comes pure and perfect from the hand of God.

To illustrate this point, suppose the case of a newly created being, coming first into existence, and being in the universe alone with God. He finds himself possessed of a most exquisite mental and moral constitution. He is a sentient being, and his nicely balanced powers are acting in perfect harmony with the physical frame of things which surrounds him, and which is filled with numberless sources of enjoyment.

Now to such a being, newly created, and coming at once to the knowledge of himself—his wonderful nature, the almost boundless reach

of his faculties, and the vast and varied avenues to enjoyment which the universe opens before him, it must appear a most desirable object to gratify himself in the pursuit of every thing which can minister to it.

He could not but desire to be unrestrained, unfettered, and to range the universe at will—to bring all his faculties into exercise, and to have every chord touched which could awaken a thrill of satisfaction. His own perfect *freedom*, especially, in so doing—the privilege, in short, of *seeking his own happiness in his own way*, could not but be greatly prized.

And to be required to *surrender* that freedom, at the very time when he feels its desirableness, would be attended with aversion; and it would need something more than a weak inducement to lead him freely to submit to such a requisition; for, in so doing, he would surrender that which is really a positive good to him, and which he feels to be such.

Is it said, that perfect sinlessness precludes the possibility of there being any difficulty in

submission to right and reasonable demands, and that one who was made in the "image of God," and came directly from his hand, would, as a matter of course, be influenced by the same regard for his glory and the general good as he himself is, and be ready to seek it at any and every sacrifice; even that as soon as any course of action manifestly secured this, such action would appear so desirable, as to be chosen without difficulty? But on this supposition, sin could never have had an existence; that is, if it cost no sacrifice for a being to take uniformly a right course, then such a course would invariably have been chosen, and sin never would have been heard of. But it *does exist*, and therefore the course of right and reasonable action, even in a sinless being, *does* require self-denial, and is *not* chosen without difficulty—without sacrifice, and it *does* cost a struggle, even far more severe perhaps than we have been accustomed to suppose, for such a one freely to give up himself to his Maker's control, surrender entirely his independence, and be

ever ready to yield his own immediate pleasure for the glory of God and the general good.

But, it may be asked—Did not our *first parents* obey the commands of God perfectly for some considerable time previous to their fall, and were they not at that time, positively holy, and did they not possess all desirable and even possible perfection of moral character? To this it is replied—They obeyed him as long as his requisitions fell in perfectly with their inclinations, and obedience cost them no self-denial.

When it did, they refused to obey. They were not willing to obey God always, and in all things; and the proof is that they *did not.*

To have submitted to *all* of God's righteous demands, would have required in Adam, and does require, perhaps, in the case of every newly created being, a great amount of self-denial; and we say, therefore, that *confirmed holiness*—that degree of moral principle which will result in settled obedience to God through eternity, and which is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the universe, is not by any means a

matter of course and does not necessarily exist in a moral being at the outset of his career, simply because he is *sinless*, but may be a very difficult matter, even in a pure and perfect being as he comes from the hand of his Maker.

At all events, we know, that, in the case of Adam and Eve, the love of freedom in self-gratification was stronger than the command of God personally given, and enforced by the most fearful penalties.

And, yet, however averse any such being may naturally be to the necessary restraints of Law, and however unwilling to submit to them, however difficult a matter he may find it to sacrifice his individual pleasure to the general good, still he ought, manifestly, ever to be held firmly to this, as the only possible way in which the welfare of the universe can be secured. God, as a benevolent Being, *must* require of him an entire, unconditional surrender to himself; so full, and hearty, and entire, as that he will never be led to renounce his allegiance. Nothing short of this would be the dictate of benev-

olence, because nothing short of this would ensure the harmony of the moral creation and prevent its continued exposure to the awful miseries of rebellion.

4. Such being the difficulty of submission, *it must require a corresponding amount of influence to induce such a one freely to yield himself to his Maker's control.*

But, now, granting it possible, according to the view presented in *Chapter sixth*, that moral beings, away from this world, can be governed by nothing but *motive*, and, according to *Chapter second*, that the present system is yet in its *infancy*, and it is possible, that, at the commencement of the system, there were not sufficient motives in existence, actually to lead such beings to surrender themselves to the control of the Almighty.

We find *in this world*, that similar beings may have so great a degree of light and knowledge in respect to the duties they owe God, as to render them fully responsible to him, and entirely inexcusable for withholding obedience, and still utterly refuse to act in accordance with

the light and knowledge they possess; and become, therefore, justly, exposed to the righteous penalty of the Law.

We find, furthermore, that no degree of motive which is brought to bear upon them, is of itself alone, sufficient to overcome this aversion to submission; even that the infinite motives which the Bible presents,—on the one hand blessedness as the reward of that submission, the *best* in kind, the *greatest* in degree, and the *longest* in duration; and on the other hand the punishment of continued disobedience, the *worst* in kind, the *greatest* in degree, and the *longest* in duration, coupled even with the fact that the individual has been taught from childhood that these things were true, and *believes them to be so*—are yet insufficient to lead him to give up himself in willing and cheerful obedience to the Almighty; and were it not for the peculiar influences of the Holy Spirit, imparted in the mercy of God, not a single individual would avail himself of the provisions made for his restoration to holiness and happiness.

Is it said that the extreme aversion of *men* to submission, is owing to their connection with a depraved ancestor, Adam, so that without this connection, such an aversion would not have existed?*

But, if so, then the question arises,

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* A few extracts from Beecher's Conflict of Ages, touching this point, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

"All attempts to explain the connection between the sin of Adam and the ruin of his posterity, have been so unsatisfactory, as to create a violent presumption that the idea is, in itself, incapable of vindication or defence."—p. 454.

The doctrine of a fall of the whole human race in Adam, rests, mainly, upon the interpretation given of Rom. 5:12–19, making the death spoken of, mean spiritual as well as temporal death. Respecting this, he says, "There was originally and for four centuries still another view of this passage; that of the Greek Church, which regarded the death spoken of in it as merely natural death. Before Tertullian and Augustine this was also the view of the Latin Church. Irenæus, the great opponent of heretics, knew nothing of anything but physical death in this passage. In favor of this view the authority of the Greek fathers is uniform and unbroken."—p. 372.

"Four centuries passed away after the epistle to the Romans was written, before the word (death) was ever here interpreted in this broad sense. Nor was that sense ever adopted by the

Whence did Adam derive *his* aversion to restraint which led *him* from the mere love of self-gratification to disobey the Almighty and dare the fearful penalty of transgression? Is it said that he was led to it by the temptation of the Devil? Then whence came that aversion to restraint which led the Fallen Angel to throw off his allegiance to God? Whence, in short, came that aversion to restraint and submission, which laid the foundation of the *first sin in the universe*, whenever and wherever committed. *That* aversion must have existed in the nature of the moral being who commit-

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Greek Church at all. Is it not to be supposed that the Greek fathers were capable of judging what was the true sense of so plain and so common a word, as here used by a writer of Greek?"—p. 411.

"Though it is true that we have corrupt natures, and are personally sinners, and therefore liable to other and higher inflictions, yet these things are not asserted IN THIS PASSAGE to have been caused by the sin of Adam."—p. 409.

"The entire spirit of the passage is judicial. It speaks of acquitting and condemning, and not of making holy or sinful."—p. 397.

ted it, and existed there as a necessary part of his original constitution; (see Chap. VII. 1;) for to suppose that God introduced such an element unnecessarily, is to violate all the principles of moral rectitude belonging to him. But if then and there it formed an *essential* element in the constitution of a moral being, then it enters, also, as a necessary element into the original constitution of *every* such one who ever has been or will be created; and the aversion of *men* to the Law which God imposes on them is *not* derived primarily from their connection with Adam, but exists in them as in all other beings—though doubtless modified in some important particulars in God's benevolence, by means of this connection. And as no amount of motive is of itself sufficient to produce submission to the will of God, in their case—they having once transgressed—while still for every moment's continuance in rebellion they are wholly inexcusable, so in beings who have *not* sinned, when they first come to the trial of allegiance, there may also be an unwillingness to submit to the will and pleas-

ure of God which the motives existing at the commencement of a moral system, may be inadequate to overcome, while they will still be entirely inexcusable in the commencement or continuance of their transgression.

From the foregoing we infer a possible reason WHY SIN EXISTS, namely—That at the outset of this moral system there were not sufficient motives in existence actually to induce moral beings to submit to those restraints which the general good demands, and without which, there is, and there can be, no security for the eternal welfare of the universe. In a word, existing motives were not sufficient to induce them to sacrifice their love of freedom in self-gratification to the glory of God and the general welfare, although these motives were abundantly sufficient to render their rebellion entirely inexcusable. The objection that the angels in Heaven have never rebelled, has been briefly noticed at the close of the *preceding Chapter*, *Rem.* 5, and will be noticed again hereafter.

With regard to the general views here advanced, it is obvious that *they make sin origi-*

nate in innocent constitutional propensity. This doctrine appears to be fully sustained by the Scriptures. The apostle James gives a very clear and definite account of the origin of sin in the human soul. "Every man," he says, "is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin." (James 1 : 14, 15.) Scott, in commenting on this passage, uses this remarkable language. "This may be considered the Scriptural account of the original of moral evil,—the natural history of the production of the first sin and of *every* sin." Let us consider the passage somewhat in detail.

The process here described appears to be briefly this. The man is led by circumstances to *think* of an object. Upon this object the Lust fastens itself with earnestness, and the purpose is awakened, "conceived," to possess it. The *determination* to possess it, is the "bringing forth" of sin; or in other words, the mind thinks of an object, desires it, raises the question of its possession, *determines* to possess it.

It will be observed that the whole process in

the mind terminating finally in sin, *commences* in what the Apostle calls "lust;" and therefore the question under consideration, turns on whether the "*lust*," which lies at the bottom, is sinful or innocent. Says Doddridge in his exposition of this passage, "Every man is tempted by the *innate weakness* of his own nature." Scott is still more explicit. He translates the word ἐπιθυμία not *lust* but "vehement desire;" and says that the original word is often used in a good sense, and simply means a vehement inclination, whatever may be the object. This will presently appear.

Although the English word *lust* which our translators have adopted, is almost never used now except in a bad sense, implying not only a desire, but the full concurrence of the Will toward a sinful object, yet this is not the meaning of the original word as frequently used in the Bible. For instance in Luke 22 : 15, the Saviour says—"With desire (ἐπιθυμία) I have desired to eat this passover." Paul also says in 1 Thes. 2 : 17, "We endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great

desire" (ἐπιθυμία.) Again in Phil. 1 : 23, he says, "Having a desire (ἐπιθυμία) to depart and be with Christ." So far then as the simple word "lust" is concerned, apart from the context, it *may* mean that only which is innocent. But will the connection in which it stands admit of it?

1. In this passage, "lust" is represented as the mother of sin, and if this be *also* sinful, then there is something sinful besides sin; and for this we have no authority in the Bible.

2. The Apostle calls this being "drawn away of one's own lust and enticed," temptation. "Every man is *tempted*," &c. But in the preceding context he says, "*Blessed* is the man that endureth temptation." Now if the lust, which is the source of temptation, be *also* sinful, then is the conclusion inevitable that a man is blessed in enduring that, *in himself*, which is sinful.

3. The Apostle in Heb. 4 : 15, says that the man Christ Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Christ then, himself, was "drawn away of his own lust and

enticed;" that is, he was tempted by the natural propensities of his human nature precisely as we are. But if these natural desires and propensities were innocent in him, then are they innocent in us.

If, then, innocent constitutional propensity may be the occasion of sin in us, it may be in other moral beings and indeed in all moral beings; and the passage under consideration be, as Scott has expressed it, "the natural history of the production of the *first* sin and of *every* sin."

We come then to the following conclusions respecting the FIRST SIN *committed in the universe.*

1. There must have been some inducement to its commission, for no being would sin simply for the sake of sinning.

2. It must have been an inducement consistent with a perfectly *sinless nature* as it came from the hand of God; for God is not the author of moral imperfection, and there were no sinful beings in existence to present temptation.

3. It must have been an inducement existing

in the sinless nature itself, for nothing *merely external* to a moral being can be an inducement. Before an external object can be rightly termed an inducement, it must find something in the moral nature to work upon; and any object or consideration which fails to awaken a desire toward itself within the mind, can not become an inducement to any action either right or wrong; so that it becomes true not only of "every man," but of every moral being, that he "is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust" or awakened desire; "then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin," that is, the external object or consideration, coming before the mind or in contact with it, *begets* in it, (to carry out the Scripture figure,) a desire, and this desire produces sin—that is, leads the being to sin for the sake of gratifying it.

That such inducements to sin *may* exist in a perfectly pure and holy nature is evident, else our Saviour could not have been tempted; and furthermore our First Parents must have had a desire to partake of the forbidden fruit, previously to any consent obtained from the will,

and previously therefore to any taint of transgression.

4. It must have been *inseparable* from the nature of the best kind of moral beings; for God would not introduce an unnecessary element into his constitution, which he foresaw would lead to the commission of that very sin which he above all things hates. This would make God himself a *tempter*, and "God can not be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man," nor any moral being.

5. It must have been a desire awakened in the mind toward some object or end which appeared valuable as being capable of promoting in some way the *happiness* of the being; for without this, he would have made no effort to secure it.

6. This first sin must have been committed from an effort to secure such an object in violation of some command given him by the Almighty; otherwise there could have been no sin committed, for "where no Law is there is no transgression."

7. It must have been a command which

crossed, in some way, natural inclinations, otherwise it would have not have been disobeyed.

8. This command must have been imposed by the Almighty for some great and benevolent object; for God would not lay a command upon his creature which he foresaw would result in so dreadful a thing as his rebellion, unless there were some object of great value to be secured by it, and which could be secured in no other way.

As has been shown,* this command may have been imposed upon him as a *test of his allegiance to God;* and in order to give him the best opportunity he could ever have, for becoming confirmed forever in holiness and happiness, by obeying it; and therefore, this first sin committed may have been the melancholy result of a necessary *Probation.*

9. It was undoubtedly committed in the face of *all possible influences to the contrary;* for no reason appears why God would not do everything he consistently could to prevent the

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* Chapter 5.

existence of that which above all conceivable things, in his moral system, he hates, and thus throw upon the sinner the entire responsibility of his wrong doing.

10. Granted that under mere law, MOTIVES are the only influences which can consistently be used in the government of moral beings, and we come to the conclusion that this first sin was committed because there was not a sufficient amount of motive in existence, at the commencement of the creation of moral beings, actually to prevent it; and furthermore, that, from the satisfactory evidence existing of God's perfections at the time of its commission, it was an act of unreasonable and wilful rebellion against his authority, and a deliberate sacrifice of the highest good of his universe; and as such, deserving of unqualified condemnation, and of being immediately followed by the execution of the threatened penalty

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSISTENCY OF THE FOREGOING VIEWS WITH THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

THE Theory has now been stated in its general principles. It remains only to show, in this connection, the consistency of these principles with the Divine Perfections.

It will be noticed that an attempt has been made to invent a possible hypothesis which should account for the existence of sin, without sacrificing either the Benevolence or the Omnipotence of the Deity. Such a view, it is believed, is secured by the present Theory.

First—It does not sacrifice his Benevolence, for the simple reason that it does not appear that anything better could have been done than has been.

1. Not to create intelligent and voluntary beings at all, would be to lose the happiness

which will be secured by a moral universe through eternity. Hence the existence of a moral system.

2. An infinite being can not be created. Hence *finite* moral beings.

3. Such finite moral beings as exist are the best which could be created, for they were made in God's own image, and were placed from the first in the best possible position for continuance in holiness.

4. Such beings could be governed by nothing but motives,—and all existing motives were brought into requisition, to prevent their transgression, and *what more could be done*?

Neither, in the *second place*, does it sacrifice his *Omnipotence*, but only limits it, as it must ever be limited, by the nature of things; and which reflects no more dishonor on his perfections, than would be done by the position that Omnipotence can not cause a thing *to be* and *not to be* at the same time; for according to the foregoing view,

1. Moral beings are such that by their very

natures they can be controlled by nothing but motives.

2. The only motives which will *actually* restrain them from disobedience are those created by the dealings of God's Providence with other moral beings.

3. These motives can not in the nature of things exist, until such beings have existed and become the subjects of such dealings, and can not therefore exist at the commencement of a moral administration;—for motives drawn from the *exhibition* of God's justice and mercy in his treatment of sinners, manifestly can not exist before such an exhibition has been made; and the exhibition can not be made, until moral beings have been created and have sinned; and *if* sin has arisen for the want of such an exhibition, then it has arisen from the absence of that which, at the commencement of a moral administration, *can not* exist.

In this view it appears to be nothing derogatory to the perfections of the Deity to say that

sin *could not* have been prevented, even by Omnipotence.

It should be noticed, in conclusion, that the present theory by no means involves the doctrine of "sin the necessary means of the greatest good." It still remains true that nothing is as good as holiness, and nothing as bad as sin, in all conceivable circumstances. Nor does it propose any *good reason* for the existence of sin. There is none. There neither is nor can be any good reason why a God of infinite wisdom and perfect benevolence, and every way lovely and worthy of regard, should not be loved and honored and obeyed by all his intelligent creatures.

If any system, therefore, embraces within itself, a good reason why sin should exist—anything which renders it at all excusable, we may be sure at once, that such a system is false from the foundation. If it trace it to the

inexperience of infantile powers; to the want of an understanding of moral relations—ignorance of right and wrong, or to individual ignorance or incapacity of any kind; or to the want of proper motives against its commission; or to the absence of freedom on the part of the moral agent; or to any act or design of God, showing his preference on the whole that it should exist in a moral system; or to anything in short, which would render it in any way excusable, such a system is, and must be inherently false; for it makes sin either unavoidable by the individual, or on the whole for the best; and, in either case, takes from it, its essential characteristic, namely, *desert of punishment.*

Nothing of this belongs to the present theory. It only suggests a possible ground of certainty which existed previous to the commission of sin, that it would be committed; just as there is a previous ground of certainty for the existence of every diabolical act of murder or midnight arson, but which in no way detracts either from its unreasonableness or

wickedness—which neither excuses, nor even palliates it.

Such is the ground of certainty which the present theory suggests for the existence of sin. It traces it to the unwillingness of a moral being to submit to necessary restraint—restraint necessary to the highest good, and seen to be imposed from the dictates of perfect benevolence; and represents the Almighty as arraying himself against it from the first and acting ever, in accordance with the principles of moral government, for its prevention; and makes the exhibition of God's mercy and his wrath—on the one hand by the punishment of the sinner, and on the other by the dreadful sacrifice of his "Only Son," as a stern and awful necessity for arresting the *progress* of rebellion in his Universe, which, had it not been for this rebellion, would have bloomed eternally in all "the beauty of Holiness."

PART II.

THE THEORY IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST MORAL BEINGS.

It is interesting to contemplate the position of a company of moral beings coming first into existence and being in the universe alone with God; which we suppose to have been the position of the fallen angels.

1. It will be proper to notice what was the probable degree of maturity which appertained to their original constitution.

It would be most natural to suppose that, like Adam, they were created in the full possession of their mental and moral faculties, and prepared at once to contemplate the peculiarities of their situation—to survey the magnificence of the material system, and to be charmed with its order, variety and beauty—to rejoice in the happiness which may have been exhibi-

ted in the lower orders of creation, to investigate the wonders of their own mental and moral constitution, and to draw from all existing sources whatever would serve to illustrate the power, wisdom and benevolence of God.

2. What course would probably be pursued with them in these circumstances? It seems probable that God would reveal himself to them, claiming to be their Creator, as well as the Creator and upholder of all the vast and visible frame of things—unfold to them his character and attributes so far as there had been an opportunity for their manifestation, and accumulate before their minds the evidence existing of the nature and extent of their obligations to love and obey him, so as to render them inexcusable for withholding obedience.

3. We notice, in the third place, the progress and result of their probation. As was stated in a previous chapter, it was probably necessary that they should have a probation—a trial of their allegiance to God, as the only thing which

could secure their confirmed obedience and eternal happiness.

It was certainly necessary, both for the individual and general welfare, that they should submit to their Maker in all circumstances; and this required, perhaps, as has been previously shown, that there should be some restriction imposed upon them, similar, in the object to be secured by it, to that imposed on Adam as the test of his allegiance.

It is probable, therefore, that God imposed on them such a restriction—the very best which could be imposed—one precisely adapted to their constitution, and the peculiarities of their situation, and demanded of them compliance with it as the only possible security for their future welfare.

He held up before them the unending happiness which would follow their self-denial and submission to himself; he represented the sad consequences of their refusal to obey—even the fearful penalty of being forever excluded from his favor, saying to them in solemn and

impressive language, "In the day that this command is broken ye shall surely die"—and presented before their minds all possible motives to deter them from transgression.

4. The sad result of this probation we learn from the declaration of the Bible: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day."

They sinned and fell, notwithstanding all that was done to prevent it. And theirs was a melancholy and a dreadful fall; and the more so because it was a hopeless one, and no possibility existed that any provisions of mercy could save them from their doom. Thus much for their general history.

And here the question naturally arises—why this result? Why has the probation of perfect moral beings terminated thus?

A possible answer is found in the considerations already presented.

1. According to the view presented in Chap-

ter VI., it is possible that under a system of mere law no other influence could properly be used to lead moral beings to obey the commands of God, but *simple motive.*

2. It is easily conceivable that at the dawn of the moral creation, there may not have been a sufficient amount of motive in existence actually to lead them to surrender themselves in willing obedience to God, even though all the motives which the universe then furnished had been accumulated before their minds.

Especially will this appear plausible when we consider the peculiarities of their position, and what motives were wanting, and must have been, from the very nature of the case, to deter them from transgression, and which have since been brought into existence.

1. They had no conception, either from experience or observation, of the nature of *suffering*, especially of that fearful form denominated *punishment*, and which, wherever justly inflicted, is mingled ever with the terrible ingredient of *remorse.*

2. They had no such warning before them to deter them from transgression, as the universe now has, in the *example* of beings sinning and receiving deserved punishment.

3. They had no palpable evidence *like this* of the veracity of God, and that he would be true to his threatenings, however dreadful.

4. They had, therefore, no *such* reason to fear him, and to look upon him not merely as a benevolent Creator, but as a great and terrible Jehovah, which the universe now has, and which led the Psalmist to exclaim, "O Lord who shall not fear thee."

5. And, furthermore, they had witnessed no manifestation of *mercy* on the part of God. His compassion for the sinful had never been made known to them, for there had been no occasion for its exhibition, especially his amazing condescension in stooping to raise fallen, guilty creatures from their degradation. That overpowering disclosure of all that is tender, melting and winning, which has since been made in the death and sufferings of God's only Son for man's redemption, and which furnishes a motive

for love and obedience to God, infinitely surpassing all others, had never been made to them. All this vast amount of motive has been created by God's dealings with his moral universe *since* the creation and fall of the first sinful beings; and the conclusion therefore is, that, at the time of their creation, there may not have been sufficient motives in existence actually to deter them from daring the tremendous experiment of disobedience.

But it may be objected that in the absence of such motives, their conduct was excusable, and that they could not justly be punished for transgression. Let us, therefore, look at the other side and see what motives they resisted, and what an amount of light they sinned against.

1. They undoubtedly had abundant evidence that God was their Creator. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that in revealing himself to them God permitted them to witness the exercise of his creative power—to behold the suns and systems of immensity coming into existence at his word, and wheeling in maj-

esty in their appointed spheres. Indeed, they may have been the very beings who saw *this* beautiful earth, as it rose from chaos at his will and under his forming hand was fashioned into loveliness, "when the *morning stars* sang together and *all* the sons of God shouted for joy." Supposing the foregoing passage to allude to them, how beautiful and appropriate the appellation to them of the "morning stars," as those who had just entered on existence—who were rejoicing in the spring-time of their conscious being—admiring the works of God, and pouring forth to him their songs of praise.

The perceived exertion of his creative power then, in the formation of the worlds, together with his own declarations to them, would give them abundant evidence that he was also *their* Creator.

2. Abundant evidence might have been furnished them that he was their *Preserver* also, on whom they were ever dependent for the *continuance* of existence. Even as, at his word, world after world and system after system rose

from nothing, so at his word, they may have been seen to return again to their original nothingness; and the strong conviction thus have been fastened on their minds, that *all* existence depended solely on Him for every moment of its continuance.

3. That he was their constant and kind Benefactor, they would learn from the happiness they themselves experienced, and which was ever welling up within them as from a ceaseless fountain—the fountain of obedience and love to God and of conscious harmony with him, of which happiness he was declared and believed to be the Author, as he had proved himself to be the Author of their entire being.

4. Abundant evidence could also be furnished them of his perfect Wisdom.

All the evidence that *we* now have in the wonderful adaptation of means to ends of which our world is full, was wide open to their inspection. Nor could any reason be discovered why that Wisdom was not *infinite*.

5. Nor could there have been the least reason for limiting his *power*. They saw before them

the same stupendous exhibitions of it which we see, and must have felt that the Divine energy was adequate to the production of all possible acts or events.

6. The evidence of his perfect Benevolence may have been seen in the happiness he was everywhere diffusing throughout the lower orders of the animal creation—as well as in the blessedness of which they were personally conscious.

From this brief sketch of the amount of evidence which they must have had respecting the character and attributes of God, it readily appears that they must have been under full and perfect obligation to his love and service; and that any failure to render him instant and unqualified obedience was utterly unreasonable and entirely without excuse; for if, to have good and sufficient evidence respecting a being that he is our Creator, Preserver, and constant and kind Benefactor, as well as that, in respect to his general character, he is entirely able and perfectly disposed to secure the *best ends* by the *wisest means*, does not impose a full and perfect

obligation of love and service to him, then it is impossible to conceive that anything else could. Indeed, there is no higher ground of moral obligation conceivable. And yet, it was against this clear light that they sinned, and no reason appears, therefore, why they did not merit a condemnation exactly proportioned to the extent of their obligations.

To illustrate this—Suppose a teacher to be introduced for the first time to a school of a hundred scholars of advanced standing. Suppose him to devise the very best system of rules for its regulation and annex to their violation appropriate penalties. The rules are reasonable and are seen to be such. That they emanate from rightful authority is not questioned. All feel under full and perfect obligation to obey them. But of the firmness of the teacher in punishing transgression they have no evidence either from experience or observation.

In these circumstances it is very probable that some will transgress. What shall be done with them? The teacher is compassion-

ate and would gladly overlook the offense. But can he? All eyes are upon him. His own character is at stake. The estimation in which he will be held hereafter—the obedience of the remainder, in short, the entire welfare of his little realm, are depending upon his firmness at this crisis. He *must* punish as he has threatened. And who would say that the punishment was not justly inflicted? True, the degree of firmness he possessed, not having been tested, had not been witnessed, and could not have been, and the unpleasantness of punishment had not been experienced.

But who thinks, on this account, of excusing the delinquents? Who would say that their punishment was not richly merited? They understood the law. They saw its reasonableness. They acknowledged the rightful authority of the teacher. They had abundant reason for believing him benevolent. They felt under perfect moral obligation to obey him. And for these reasons all would admit that their conduct was entirely inexcusable. Three things in this illustration distinctly appear.

1. The punishment inflicted in such circumstances is perfectly *just.*

2. It is absolutely *necessary* to save the character of the Teacher and prevent anarchy and insubordination from extending to all under his control.

3. It is in the highest degree benevolent, for by it his character for firmness is established, new motives to obedience are created, and this act of justice, together with other exhibitions of his character in his dealings with *the remainder*, will so win their respect and affection, that they will cheerfully submit to his authority, and their best welfare be secured.

So the Almighty may have presented himself before the first moral beings, have claimed to be their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and furnished them with abundant proof that he sustained to them such a relation. He may have given them his Law with its appropriate sanctions, made them to understand it, to see its reasonableness, and to feel that he was actuated by the most benevolent intentions in giving it, and convinced them that their own best

welfare would be secured by yielding to it unqualified obedience, and thus laid them under full and perfect obligations to submit unconditionally to his authority.

And in all probability, it was in precisely such circumstances that they transgressed. And why should not the threatened penalty be executed?

They had indeed made no trial of the awful firmness of Jehovah—they had not before them the example of other beings sinning and receiving punishment. These and other motives, since brought into existence, may have been wanting. Still they did know and feel that they were under the highest conceivable obligations to love, serve and obey God, and therefore it was not possible for them to sin without incurring great guilt and therefore deserving punishment.

Indeed, no reason appears why it may not be said with equal propriety of them as of the heathen of our world—"The invisible things of him from the creation of the worlds were clearly seen, being understood by the things

that were made, even his eternal power and divine excellence, so that they ~~are~~ WERE *without excuse*," and deserved the penalty inflicted on them for their rebellion. Their guilt was proportioned to the light enjoyed, as guilt always is, and they were punished accordingly.

It is not seen, therefore, why the principles derived from the foregoing illustration may not be equally applicable to the sinning angels.

1. Their punishment was *just.*

2. It was *necessary* to save the character of the Lawgiver, and uphold the majesty of his government.

3. It was *benevolent*, because the infliction of the threatened penalty, would alone deter the universe from a similar rebellion, and would result therefore in the prevention of far greater suffering.

The *duration* of their punishment is declared to be endless, as is that of all incorrigible sinners. On this point, the Scripture testimony is as clear and unequivocal as language can make it.

"The angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation he hath reserved in *everlasting* (ἀϊδίοις) chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6.

The same word is used in Rom. 1 : 20: "his eternal (ἀϊδίος) power and Godhead."

It is a significant fact that this word ἀϊδίος is used but twice in the New Testament—once to indicate the duration of God's power, and once in reference to the punishment of the Angels.

It comes from the root ἀει, (always,) and throughout the New Testament is thus translated, with a single exception, and then translated *ever*, but with the same unlimited signification.

How long shall ascriptions of praise be offered to God in Heaven? In Rev. 5 : 13, John heard the animated universe saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb *forever and ever*," (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.) But in Rev. 20 : 10 the declaration is, "The Devil that deceived them was cast into

the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night *forever and ever*," (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,) the expression in each being precisely the same and used by the same writer.

How long will the righteous be happy? The answer is *forever*, for their reward is represented in Matt. 25 : 46 as being "*eternal* (αἰώνιον) life." But it is a very significant fact that precisely the *same* word is used and *in the same verse* to indicate the duration of the punishment of the wicked. "These shall go away into *everlasting* (αἰώνιον) punishment."

Now between any degree of finite punishment, and that which is eternal, *there is just an infinite difference;* and if these expressions in the one case are to be limited, and in the other not, then are the *same* words and *in the same connection* applied to things between which there is an *infinite difference;* an inconsistency and absurdity in the use of language, which has no parallel in the weakest of *human* productions.

How long shall God exist? Says the Apos-

tle in 1 Tim. 6 : 16, "To whom be honor and power *everlasting*," (αἰῶνιον) and again in 1 Tim. 1 : 17, "Now unto the King *eternal*," (των αἰώνων.) But says the same Apostle, 2 Thess. 1 : 9, "Who shall be punished with *everlasting* (αἰώνιον) destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

How can such a use of language be explained in such a book as the Bible, if the idea of endless punishment be only a figment of the human brain? And why, furthermore, does not the supposition that it is, convict the Author of the Bible of the most egregious trifling, and of a deliberate attempt to terrify men with an impression which has no existence in reality; for, if the Bible does not teach the doctrine of endless punishment, then the idea can not be conveyed in language.

Therefore, it is, that the argument from the Scriptures is now very nearly abandoned; and objections to the doctrine are drawn almost entirely from the light of reason; and the attempt is made to show that it is manifestly inconsistent with benevolence or utterly absurd.

1. It is objected that an *earthly* father would not punish his children with such dreadful severity; why then should God, who is so much more kind and compassionate? Answer.

First. An earthly parent does not punish thus because there is no need of it. He can secure the best good of his little realm without it; and unnecessary severity is ever reprehensible. But, it should be remembered that he only is kind to his family, who sustains fully his authority among its members; and he is exceedingly unkind, and lacking in true benevolence, who shrinks from the infliction of that punishment, which is necessary to secure general obedience. Is it not thus in God's family?

Secondly. If in the little circle of a single family, a degree of punishment is indispensable, is the supposition so manifestly absurd, that *endless* punishment may be necessary in the control of a universe which may be expanding and enlarging *through eternity?*

Thirdly. The objection assumes that the parental relation is the only one which God

sustains to his creatures, and throws entirely out of sight the equally obvious relation of moral Governor; and why this should be so perseveringly done by those who urge it, does not plainly appear, since the one relation is as manifest as the other. Now this position of moral Governor demands that he watch over the interests of his great sovereignty with the most jealous care—that he defend it from everything which would assail its welfare, and at all hazards and at every conceivable sacrifice, arrest the progress of rebellion. This latter principle men perfectly understand, and esteem no promptitude and severity of punishment too great, if it be but necessary to sustain the supremacy of *law;* and the leaders of a riot, when other means fail to reduce them, are bayoneted and shot in the public streets without mercy; and men feel that law, and order, and obedience, are *cheaply* purchased, even at such a sacrifice. So on the loftier field of God's administration. As no conceivable amount of suffering necessary to arrest the progress of sin would begin to equal

the suffering of leaving it unchecked, so, should it require, in order to stop it, the eternal confinement of incorrigible sinners in the great prison-house of the universe, the result would be *cheaply* purchased; for the suffering which would flow from the eternal punishment of all the sinners in God's dominions, would only be to the misery of unrestrained rebellion, like a drop to the ocean in comparison.

2. It is objected still that such severity of punishment can not be *necessary*. Answer.

First. He who is competent to pronounce eternal punishment unnecessary, is competent to say what degree *is* necessary. Will the objector state what penalty annexed to God's law less than he has annexed in the Bible, will be sufficient to control his universe? If not competent to this, then he may not affirm, certainly, that the punishment threatened is unnecessarily severe.

Secondly. Is it *certain* that any limited penalty will be sufficient to arrest the progress of sin? How could this be proved?

Thirdly. Is it certain that any infliction less

than this will show *how much God hates sin?* Ought he not to exhibit before his universe his *real* feelings? Ought he to hold up himself in a *false* aspect, by annexing to sin a finite penalty, if his own abhorrence of it is infinite? Can any one prove that his abhorrence of it is *not* infinite?

Fourthly. Is it certain that any less infliction than this will uphold the majesty of law and the authority of government, and lay the foundations of God's great moral administration securely?

Obviously, therefore, no one can *prove* from any source whatever, that endless punishment is not just as necessary as is the existence of a moral system, and no one, therefore, is competent to pronounce eternal punishment *unnecessary.*

3. It is objected again that a *finite* being can not commit an *infinite* sin. Answer.

First. The sin of a finite creature is committed against a Being of infinite perfections. It is rebellion against a God of infinite holiness—opposition to a being of infinite benev-

olence, and in this sense may be regarded as an infinite sin.

Secondly. It is committed in the face of infinite obligations to the opposite course of obedience and affection; and why infinite obligations disregarded do not result in infinite guilt and constitute, therefore, an infinite sin, does not plainly appear.

Thirdly. It assails interests of infinite value, namely, the happiness of the universe *forever;* and the magnitude of a sin is properly determined by the value of the interests invaded by it. This principle obtains in all human legislation, and hence *forgery*—an act requiring two or three seconds for its performance, may, in certain cases, be properly followed by long years of imprisonment. As, therefore, the interests assailed by sin are infinite, so is the sin, by whomsoever committed.

Fourthly. If not arrested, it would actually rob the universe of infinite happiness, and in this view is an infinite evil; and if nothing but an infinite penalty will arrest it, then such pen-

alty ought to be both threatened and inflicted, though the transgressor be finite.

Fifthly. If sin, because committed by a finite being, does not *deserve* an infinite punishment, then it does not *need* an infinite atonement, and God has been at an unnecessary sacrifice in giving for human redemption his only Son.

A finite being then, *can* commit an infinite sin in the true and proper sense of the term; and in such a sense as to deserve an infinite punishment.

4. It is objected as inconsistent with benevolence, to create a moral being whose existence, it is foreseen, will be on the whole to him a *curse.* In the light of the present theory, the objection amounts to this. If God distinctly foresaw that the first moral beings created would rebel against him, notwithstanding all proper efforts to prevent it, and by that act throw themselves beyond the possibility of return to him, and be rendered, therefore, *eternally* miserable, he should relinquish the plan of a moral system, and with it the infinite

good resulting from its eternal expansion in holiness and happiness.

If the statement itself be not a sufficient answer, it may be added,

First. It *assumes* that God is entirely responsible for the foreseen conduct and destiny of his creatures, and, therefore, that he can not rightly create a being who shall be the responsible author of *his own* conduct and destiny; that is, that he can not rightly create *a free moral agent.* Is this *perfectly* evident? Is not the assumption contradicted by the manifest fact that he *has* created multitudes of such beings?

Secondly. The objection may require that system to be rejected which is the best possible, and does require it, if in a moral system eternal penalties are indispensable. Ought this manifestly to be done?

Thirdly. In the light of the present theory the objection requires God to sacrifice to the inexcusable wickedness of a company of his creatures, the eternal happiness of his universe. Would this accord with benevolence?

Fourthly. In this view, therefore, to sacrifice the *general* to the *individual* good—a position contrary to the commonest dictates of common sense.

Fifthly. The objection *carried out*, would require the greatest amount of happiness to be sacrificed to the least amount of unhappiness—a principle never recognized elsewhere.

Sixthly. It demands that God shall dwell alone forever, because some will not love and serve him, though he is infinitely worthy of such love and service.

Seventhly. The objection is contrary to the plain declaration of the Bible, "*Good were it for that man if he had never been born.*" Mark 14: 21. What is this but existence a curse?

5. It is objected that the doctrine of endless punishment makes punishment an *end* and not a *means*. On the contrary, in the present view, it is nothing but means.

First. It is the means for showing God's hatred of sin before his universe.

Secondly. It is the means for sustaining the majesty of his law and the authority of

his government, and laying the foundations of his moral administration securely.

Thirdly. By confining the wicked in the great penitentiary of the universe, he prevents those who are in rebellion against him from extending their influence and efforts to draw others away from him.

Fourthly. It is a means, therefore, for saving the universe of holy beings from the constant presence and annoyance of wickedness.

Fifthly. It is therefore the great instrumentality for arresting the progress of rebellion.

Sixthly. It is the *indispensable* means, therefore, of preventing an inconceivably greater amount of suffering, and is the dictate of perfect benevolence, in every aspect in which it can rightly be viewed.

CHAPTER II.

MAN.

THE topics to be considered under this head, might readily be expanded to a volume, instead of being compressed into the limits of a single chapter. The effort, therefore, for the most part, will be merely to glance at those particular points of doctrine which will be modified by the theory under consideration, and which, as thus modified, may, perhaps, the more readily be reconciled with our necessary conceptions of the infinite and perfect benevolence of God.

SEC. 1.—*Why Man was created.*

We have seen in the previous chapter that, in the case of the fallen angels, the great end of moral government, obedience to God, has failed to be secured. They sinned and fell not-

withstanding all that could consistently be done to prevent it. Yet, though the result has been thus melancholy, and though their transgression, in its natural and necessary results, has been unspeakably dreadful, has even been evil and only evil, still, one great and valuable end has been secured by God's *treatment* of it. He has shown, in its punishment, an inflexible determination to uphold the majesty of his Law and the authority of his Government; and sin will ever, from this time, appear to the universe, a fearful and terrible experiment.

But this may not be sufficient to lay the foundations of moral government securely. With all this, it may still be true, that should moral beings be again created, they would not be kept forever from transgression; and that to people the universe with intelligent beings with only the existing amount of motive to the love and service of God, would result in nothing but rebellion and misery.

The punishment of the angels might have deterred them from transgression for a season; but familiarity with a fearful object, weakens

its influence; so this punishment long contemplated might gradually lose its fearfulness, till it would be insufficient to induce submission on the part of the newly created. Or it may be that such a terrible illustration of God's inflexibility in the execution of his threatenings against sin, unaccompanied with any farther exhibition of his tenderness and love, any farther proof than then existed that he was actuated, even in this severe treatment of his creatures only by a wish to secure the best good of all, and that he was governed by no unholy or revengeful feelings, and inflicted the threatened punishment far more in sorrow than in anger,—I say, had no farther proofs been furnished that *these* feelings still operated in the Divine bosom, this severity might have been perverted, in their apprehension, into tyranny; they might, at length, have begun to question God's benevolence, and raise doubts as to whether such terrible dealings could consist with a real desire for the highest good—to reason even as men do in this world, who are inclined to cast off his authority, and who

shrink from perfect submission to his will; and a partial feeling of alienation might thus have been engendered, and this, working with the natural repugnance to control which we have supposed to belong to all moral beings, might eventually have led them to rebel against God.

However this may be, it certainly is true that, had the Almighty stopped here in the development of his character, it never would have been exhibited before his moral universe in that aspect of surpassing loveliness which it *now* presents. It never could have affected moral beings as it now affects them, and never could have had anything like the tendency it now has, to draw them all in affectionate obedience to himself. And it is not at all improbable, that God, in his omniscience, foresaw, that, should he make no farther manifestation of his character, obedience to himself could never be secured in a universe of intelligent beings; and that whoever should be created would eventually become estranged from him, and following the same dreadful course of their predecessors, become miserable forever.

What shall be done? Shall the plan of a moral system be abandoned, and with it, all the happiness it would ultimately secure? No: God foresaw its entire results when he undertook the work, and will not be diverted from his purpose of having a universe of intelligent beings, rendering him a voluntary and affectionate service—happy in his love for them, and in their love for him; and to secure such a result, he is willing to be at an infinite expenditure.

Behold then the Almighty, in the plenitude of his Wisdom and Benevolence, entering upon the accomplishment of this great work. He selects this world as a theater for a still more wonderful exhibition of his perfections. He enters on the creation of another race of beings, whom he will place in such circumstances, that, in the event of their certain transgression, he can "lay hold" on them, and open a way for their restoration to his forfeited favor, and thus bring out in all its splendor, the perfect glory and harmony of his character.

And we suppose that his entire dealings with this world are subordinate, and to as great an extent as possible subservient to this one end, *the manifestation of his infinite mercy, as an indispensable requisite to the confirmation of newly created beings in holiness and happiness.*

SEC. 2—*Why the Fallen Angels were not redeemed.*

At this point a question arises—Why, if God wishes to show mercy to the sinful, does he not show it to the Fallen Angels. Why not "lay hold" on them. Says the Apostle, Heb. 2: 16, "He taketh *not* hold of *angels* but of the *seed of Abraham* he taketh hold."*

One answer to this question may be, that such an act might not be consistent with the safety of his moral administration. It might

* Our translators seem not to have apprehended the true meaning of this passage, and by the words which they have supplied, make it mean that Christ assumed a human instead of an angelic nature. The marginal rendering above is undoubtedly the correct one.

leave the impression upon his universe that transgression was safe, and that, however his creatures might trifle with his authority, he would yet, in the resources of his infinite nature, devise some way by which their sin could be overlooked and forgiven; and thus, he would, as it were, hold out an inducement to rebellion. The exercise of the pardoning power is usually a dangerous expedient; and wherever there is good and sufficient reason for believing that the promulgation of pardon will be perverted by the subjects of government, and lead them to presume upon its leniency, and thus tempt them to disobedience, it ought not to be resorted to, however severe the penalty, and however averse the lawgiver to its infliction.

And God may have foreseen that such would be the inevitable result should he redeem the angels; and that their redemption would be perverted in after ages, and lay the foundation of a wide-spread rebellion extending finally throughout his entire dominions. The general

good, therefore, may have demanded that they be left to "eat of the fruit of their own way," and remain forever a beacon-light to warn the universe against trifling with God's law.

But another reason may also exist why the angels were not redeemed. It may be impossible, in the very nature of things, that they could be induced to accept of mercy even were it offered them. *Men* are not led to accept of it, except in connection with the strivings of God's infinite Spirit, and even then, multitudes of them, "*do always resist the Holy Ghost.*" But the circumstances in which the angels sinned, were peculiar. There were no unholy beings in existence to tempt them; their rebellion was a willful and deliberate determination,—as willful and deliberate as an act of sin could ever be—to abandon God and array themselves in opposition to his government.

And now it is very possible, that, sinning with such willfulness and deliberation, they threw themselves beyond the reach of hope and mercy. It is very possible that the confidence in God, necessary to repentance, could

never after be awakened within them. The memory of such an act would ever after rise before their minds in such a dreadful aspect, be graven upon them with such terrible distinctness, and be accompanied with such overwhelming remorse, as to result in perfect and remediless despair.

A point in depravity is often reached by a long course of comparatively deliberate transgression, even in this world, where temptation is pressing on every side to diminish the conscious turpitude of sin—where there is so much which men regard as palliating their wickedness, and where too, the kindness and mercy of God, and his willingness to forgive, have been rendered so conspicuous in the work of Redemption—a point in depravity, I say, is often reached here in this world, when the man looks back over his career of transgression with such a consciousness of its inexcusableness, and with a sense of consequent guilt coming so clearly and terribly upon him, that he is driven to fixed despair; and even when death is staring him

in the face, and he expects in a few short hours to be amid the dreadful realities of an undone future, he yet dares not hope for mercy, and leaves the world with the certainty before him of the most fearful retribution, exclaiming, perchance as did the dying infidel Francis Spira, "O the insufferable pangs of Hell and Damnation."

Furthermore, there is sin mentioned in the Bible of such a peculiarly aggravated character, as to render it "IMPOSSIBLE" for him who commits it "to be renewed to repentance;" and it declares unequivocally that for him who "*sins* WILLFULLY" after he has "received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful looking for of judgment."

And why may not a similar effect invariably follow the commission of the *most* deliberate sin—sin without temptation presented from without—sin such as the Devil committed. Who shall say that, to the mind of the Fallen Angel, there comes not the remembrance of goodness unrequited and warnings unheeded

with such fearful vividness, unaccompanied with any palliating circumstance, as to render his return to God and holiness morally impossible, and therefore, any provisions of grace for him, like those furnished for the sinful of this world, absolutely useless; and thus to make the very circumstances in which he sinned, bind him forever to hopeless retribution.

In the single fact of such intelligent deliberation in rebellion, may perhaps be found a sufficient reason, even if no other existed, why no provisions of grace were made for the angels, while for our sinful race there was wrought out so great salvation.

The use which may be made of this latter point, in showing the benevolence of human temptation, will appear hereafter.

SEC. 3.—*Moral economy of this world in its general aspect.*

As has been already stated, the grand object which we suppose God has in view is that of laying securely the foundations of a glorious moral system. To do this there must be a

manifestation of God's mercy as well as of his justice; for at this point in creation, no moral beings can consistently be prevented from sinning. But mercy can not be shown to the fallen Angels, and therefore unless the plan of such a system be abandoned, and the material universe remain unpeopled, another race of intelligences must be created, and the economy under which they are placed, must be one involving *salvation for the sinful.*

But numerous difficulties attend such an undertaking.

1. Inasmuch as any moral beings brought into existence at this stage of creation will inevitably sin, it is very possible that unless special measures be taken to prevent it, they will so sin as to be thrown like the fallen angels beyond the reach of hope and mercy. It would appear therefore that the *circumstances in which* they shall sin would need to be changed—they must be different from those in which the Angels sinned and were lost.

2. The *full* penalty of sin must be suspended, for that would bring upon them, in the event of

their transgression, eternal and remediless ruin, as it did upon their predecessors. But

3. If the appropriate penalty of sin, and that which alone gives proper expression to God's abhorrence of transgression, and which therefore alone exhibits him in a *true* light before his intelligent creatures, is to be suspended, and mercy is to be shown, then there must be some expedient to prevent injury to the perfection of government. There must be some kind of *compensation* for this remission of appropriate and necessary penalty. This opens to our view at once the atonement by Christ Jesus as the great expedient of compensation which renders forgiveness safe, even in a perfect moral administration. This will be considered in its proper place. But,

4. The race for whom this Redemption is to be provided must be induced in part, at least, to accept of it. They must be benefited by it to a sufficient extent to warrant the necessary expenditure. Should the atonement be ever so full, and ever so well adapted to their case, yet it would be all unavailing unless they can

be led to some extent, at least, to profit by it. Now from the view which has been presented elsewhere, all the motives in the universe would not deter even holy beings from sinning at this stage of creation, much less lead to the abandonment of a sinful course once entered on.

It does not appear that motives would have any more influence to lead to the abandonment than the avoidance of sin. If this be granted, then there must be some influence over and above that of existing motives to induce any being to abandon a sinful course, and enter on a life of holiness.

And herein, we suppose, is found the necessity for those peculiar influences of God's Holy Spirit which, in connection with the atonement by Jesus Christ, have been given to the world, and which, so far as we can learn from the representations of the Bible, though exerted always in connection with truth or motives of some kind to give them efficacy, are above and beyond these, and are felt directly on the soul, and only on account of their

mighty though mysterious operation, is a single sinner ever led to relinquish his course of transgression and enter on a new life of devotion to his Maker.

We see, therefore, that the economy under which the next race of beings must apparently be placed in order to secure the great end of mercy, must embrace the main particulars above mentioned.

They must sin in *different circumstances* from their predecessors.

There must be some provision to *compensate* for the absence of the appropriate penalty of sin.

And over and above all must there be some special influence leading them to accept this provision.

So far as we can learn, both from Reason and Revelation, these are the precise conditions in which we find God has placed the human family, and as we proceed in our investigations, we shall find how wonderfully God, in his infinite wisdom and benevolence, has anticipated all the difficulties inherent in the

proposed economy, and made this world, notwithstanding all, a world of mercy and salvation.

A single remark further respecting this economy in its general aspect. It is to be regarded, so far as our race is concerned, as only a temporary expedient, during the existence of which, moral beings are, for the time being, removed as it were, from under the operation of simple law and penalty, where the only alternative must be perfect obedience or remediless ruin, and in a new position—under a scheme of mercy—have an opportunity afforded them for becoming confirmed in holiness *even after they have sinned.* Should this peculiar experiment for their salvation be successful—should they yield to the pressure of its mighty motives, and abandon sin, they will then be treated eternally with kindness and confidence, the same as if they had never sinned. Should it fail, inasmuch as no higher economy could be devised, and no mightier influences be exerted, they must be brought, at its termination, under the same operation of mere law and penalty—they

must be handed over to the grasp of simple *justice*, and abide the workings of its inflexible administration.

Sec. 4.—*Our First Parents.*

We suppose the entire circumstances appertaining to the position of our first parents to have had reference to the fact that they would sin, would need redemption in order to salvation, and that redemption would be provided for them, so that from its commencement to its close, it may be regarded as a scheme of recovering grace. We proceed to notice those circumstances in particular, which we suppose were designed with reference to the fact of their certain transgression, and which were intended, either to reach and affect the element in their original constitution, which would lead to their fall, or to palliate their guilt, or so to affect their positions and relations *after* their fall, as to render salvation for them practicable.

1. We perceive at the outset a manifest effort at *limitation and confinement*—an environing and restricting of the soul, apparently

with the view of curbing its impatience of restraint, and creating within it a feeling of powerlessness and dependence. For instance, they were confined to the surface of this material globe. They were not allowed, as we know the holy angels are, to roam the regions of space and "fly swiftly"* in obedience to the commands of God. They were tied to the earth by a law of gravitation, never ceasing for a moment its operation, and their transition from place to place was to be accomplished only by a slow, and measured, and tedious locomotion.

And then again, the immortal spirit, though made after God's image, and endowed with such mighty capacities—though fitted to comprehend whatever was vast and wonderful in the works of God, and perchance, as pure spirit, to come in contact with these works, through a thousand inlets, was cramped and confined in a physical organization—a human body, and restricted in its entire intercourse with the

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* Daniel 9 : 21.

external world to five senses, and compelled to derive through these its entire information. And all this we suppose to be the appropriate condition of a temporary state, where the moral being was to enjoy a merciful probation, and that it was necessary for the spirit to be thus subjected to limitation and confinement, in order that its probation might be in any degree successful.

2. We notice, in the second place, that God took special care to instruct them from his own works respecting his *character*. He placed them in a garden filled with every variety of vegetable production; as the sacred record describes it, there grew in it "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." Furthermore, in order to give them a more extended acquaintance with his works, he brought before Adam "every beast of the field and every fowl of the air," doubtless that from the study of their peculiar habits and modes of existence, and from the exhibitions of wisdom and benevolence in their formation, he

might gain impressive views of God's perfections, and also by contrasting them all with himself, and beholding their entire inferiority, might receive an abiding impression of the superior dignity and elevation of his own nature.

Undoubtedly, also, they were fitted to contemplate the peculiarities of their own mental and moral constitution, and gain from this source a knowledge of their responsibility to God. Furthermore, they might have been made acquainted with the probation and fall of their immediate predecessors, and thus have been warned against transgression. By these and other means, they were made to feel a proper degree of moral obligation to the love and service of God. To how great an extent it was proper or necessary for motives to obedience to be accumulated before their minds, we can not determine. So far as benevolence toward themselves was concerned, or a moral impression was to be made by God's dealings with them, upon the universe hereafter, it does not appear necessary that all *possible* motives

should be brought to bear upon them. For the experiment with the Fallen Angels had demonstrated all that was necessary in respect to the certainty of punishment in case of transgression. The plan of Redemption had been determined on. To the divine mind, the penalty for their sin was to be merely a temporal and partial one. They were to have another probation under a scheme of mercy. In these circumstances, perhaps, the highest possible amount of motive to deter from sin, might with propriety be dispensed with.

However this may have been, certain it was, they were brought under a *sufficient* amount of motive to render their obligation to obey God full and perfect, and their transgression entirely inexcusable.

3. They were subjected to a certain trial of obedience, the necessity and objects of which, in the view we are taking, may be learned by reference to a preceding chapter on Probation.* It was undoubtedly precisely the trial, which,

* Part I., Chap. V.

had they determined to endure it and obey God, was best adapted, all things considered, to confirm them in holiness.

4. We now come to their Temptation by Satan.

Evidently this temptation was peculiarly severe. The Serpent of whom the Devil took possession, and whose form he used as the medium for presenting the temptation, was not probably, as now, a disgusting reptile.

We infer this from the fact of his being classed among the "beasts of the field" when first spoken of, and from the nature of the sentence pronounced against him, which conveys the impression "that a debasing and deteriorating change took place in consequence of the curse."

"Accordingly," says Bush, "we find a general belief both among the ancient Jews and the early Christians, that the serpent before the fall, was not only gentle and innocuous, but in form and appearance among the most beautiful of creatures;" he even supposes that

he "moved by the aid of wings." He may have been in all respects most beautiful and attractive. Furthermore, he spake. He addressed the woman in intelligent language, such as she had heard from the mouth of God himself. He represented the fruit as exceedingly desirable. He assured her that the threatening of the Almighty would not be executed, "Ye shall *not* surely die." In corroboration of this statement, he undoubtedly partook of the fruit himself, that she might see it to be harmless, perhaps held it temptingly before her, and pressed it upon her acceptance, and by various acts of artifice and deception induced her finally to partake of it.

But the particular point to be considered is, How can the permission of this temptation, be reconciled with the benevolence of God?

First—According to the view already presented, *they would sin.*

Secondly—Without something to diminish the deliberation and consequent turpitude of the transgression, they might be thrown by it,

like the fallen Angels, beyond the possibility of redemption.

Thirdly—This temptation was possibly permitted in order to lessen in their minds the upbraidings of remorse, and render it possible for the confidence in God necessary to repentance to be awakened in their minds. This view is strengthened by the recorded interview between God and our first parents after their fall. When the question was put to Adam, which was to reveal his guilt, he evidently felt in giving his answer that the blame was not all his own, but that the solicitations of the companion whom he so tenderly loved, had served to diminish the turpitude of his crime. He does not plead innocent, but throws back the blame in part upon the woman, and she in like manner upon the serpent; and it should be particularly noticed, that the sentence was pronounced accordingly; by far the heaviest curse falling upon the latter as being the prime instigator of the rebellion.

To sin under the solicitations of a beloved companion, was fitted to produce less remorse

than a similar act where the solicitation was from the Adversary; and to sin from the solicitation of the Adversary, was fitted to produce less remorse than to sin in that deliberate manner in which we may suppose the Fallen Angels to have done; and therefore, had man sinned without the intervention of this severe temptation we have been considering, it is possible that his sense of guilt would have been so strong within him, that confidence in his Maker, and affectionate submission to him, could never afterward have been awakened in his mind, and therefore to him redemption would have been unavailing. In this view the temptation of our first parents may have been permitted only from the dictates of the most perfect benevolence.

And temptation by malignant beings may now be permitted for the same object. True, the strength of it has been very much diminished. The power of the Tempter has been broken. He never now takes a visible form, nor speaks in an audible voice, nor should we

ever be aware of the influence he is constantly exerting in the world, apart from the declarations of the Bible. Still. such temptation exists, and may now be permitted, in connection with other things hereafter to be mentioned, for the direct purpose of so modifying the conditions of human sinfulness as to save men from hopeless and remediless despair.

We have not the least reason for supposing that every effort of Satan to lead man into sin is not under the perfect control of the Almighty, and permitted in the case of each individual, just in that way and to that extent which shall place him in the best possible condition for securing salvation from the consequences of his transgression.

While the possibility of the truth of such suppositions remains, let no one reproach that benignant providence under which man is assailed by temptation. Let him remember that however much he may have deprecated its existence—however much he may even now consider it as conflicting with his interests, and however difficult or even impossible he

may regard its reconciliation with the benevolence of God, still the permission of it *may be in fact* nothing but the dictate of perfect kindness.

Let him remember, furthermore, that could he apprehend all truth, and understand the bearings and dependencies of the things which are now to him unknown, then might he see, that, in thus allowing him to be tempted in the world of his probation, his Maker was only designing to bring him within the reach of that "free gift which has come upon all men to the justification of life," and might even bless God with a full and overflowing affection for this very temptation, laying, as perhaps it does, the foundation for his final and everlasting blessedness.

5. We notice in the next place the *fall* of our first parents. The account given in the Bible is that, under the influence of temptation, they partook of the forbidden fruit, and in so doing disobeyed the command of God. As has been before said, nothing could have prevented their sinning; and they were permitted

to sin in these peculiar circumstances, that they might have opened before them a way of return to God's forfeited favor. Which leads to the consideration of the following section—God's plan of salvation.

SEC. 5.—*Plan of Salvation.*

The plan of salvation embraces two main particulars: First—To provide for the sinner a way of pardon, and Secondly—To induce him to accept it. The provision for pardon is termed Redemption, the sinner's acceptance of it, Conversion. We notice them briefly in order.

1. REDEMPTION. The problem of showing mercy to the sinful under a perfect moral government, is beset with the most appalling difficulties, such as no finite intelligence could have surmounted; and hence, to the ancient philosophers, the exercise of mercy under a perfect government was ever an inexplicable mystery. They knew it was done, for they saw its constant workings, but *how* it could be done, with safety, they knew not.

For it proposes to set aside Justice—to *treat* the violator of God's law differently from what he *is*, and *deserves*—to all appearance therefore, to hold up the character of God in a false aspect before his universe and to impair the perfection of his government—to impair the conviction also, that he hates sin with a *perfect* hatred—to lessen, therefore, the fear of its commission and to make the subjects of law presume upon the leniency of the Lawgiver—to lower the standard of moral action, and in short, in the place of a perfect system, whose only condition of perfect happiness is perfect holiness, to introduce an inferior one which would allow a certain amount of sin without its appropriate punishment, subjecting the universe to its constant presence and annoyance, and in the end, as an unavoidable result, entirely subverting the foundations of all government.

The way in which these difficulties have been met and overcome, is revealed in the Bible, in that wonderful and mysterious plan by which God has subjected himself to suffer-

ings in the person of his "only and well-beloved Son," who is declared to be "God manifest in the flesh," and thus made himself "AN OFFERING FOR SIN."

In the person of Jesus he has obeyed his own most holy and righteous law, and submitted to its requirements even "unto death," and by this fearful sacrifice, so held it up before his creatures inviolate—in its entire sanctity, and awful majesty, as to show for it a greater regard, and make upon the universe a deeper impression of its worth, than if he had laid its full penalty upon each transgressor in a world of sinners.

He has thus in the language of the Scripture, "magnified the law and made it honorable," so that it remains invested with its full dignity and inviolability even though the transgressor of it receive forgiveness. Therefore, in the very act of bestowing pardon, the possibility of which has been secured at an infinite sacrifice, he asserts still his perfect hatred of sin—that "he has no pleasure in iniquity," but regards it even with unmingled abhorrence. In a word,

he has by this grand expedient so fortified the foundations of his government that he can *safely forgive*—"that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

And all this he has done, merely from his love for the sinful and to show *how much* he loved them—that he might manifest the very height and depth of his overflowing affection; for, says the apostle John, "In this was manifested the LOVE of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him."

"Here in is LOVE, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And said our Saviour respecting himself, "God so LOVED the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Of this stupendous plan the prophet Isaiah has given us a clear and concise view in the following beautiful statement. "All we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, *and the Lord hath laid on him the ini-*

guilty of us all." And Paul, burning with a desire to commend this plan of salvation to all, says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And for himself he says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

How the pen would love to linger upon this delightful theme.

2. CONVERSION. Having provided a way of salvation, a second object is to lead those for whom it is provided to accept it. And this also is attended with numerous difficulties, resulting especially from the terrible effects of sin upon the soul of him who commits it. Such is the nature of a moral being, that his first sinful act has a tendency to prepare the way for a repetition of similar acts.

The desire of self-gratification, when indulged wrongfully, grows stronger with every repetition of the indulgence; and that which was at first, but a single *act*, becomes afterward a *principle*, and passes finally into a *habit* of sinning, unalterable, by any ordinary influence.

The steady practice of sin, drawing all the feelings and energies of the soul in this one direction, produces an insensibility and deadness to good influences, and renders the hearts of men, as the Scriptures express it, "*hard*," and to a great degree insensible to the power of holy motive. And in many cases the process goes on till Paul can say of them, "who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with *greediness*." Eph. 4 : 19.

But the process does not stop here. The intellect in its entire operations is very much under the influence of the sensibilities. The head is affected by the heart, and if the one be wrong in its affections, so will be the other in its perceptions. *Doing* right, is absolutely necessary to *knowing* right; and hence the Saviour says, "If any man will *do* his will, he shall *know* of the doctrine," thus placing doing before knowing; whereas men, especially in religious matters, are very prone to invert the process and so excuse their errors on the ground of their ignorance.

Sin, therefore, dims the intellectual perception to the beauty of holiness. The Bible speaks of sinners as "having the *understanding* darkened." Not that they lose *all* appreciation of moral beauty, for God has so made man, that he can not. He must always, in the deepest depth of pollution, admire goodness, and realize the experience of Milton's fallen Spirit,—

> ——"abashed the Devil stood,
> And *felt* how awful goodness is."

Still the "beauty of holiness" fails to kindle such admiration as it awakens in the bosom of a sinless being. For the mind engrossed in the objects of sense dislikes to be diverted from its pursuit. It loves this world—loves to live and labor for it—loves self-indulgence and will not readily relinquish it.

Furthermore, the mind apprehends objects fully and correctly only as it gazes at them long and steadily and with concentrated interest. But the soul polluted by sin, dislikes this steady gaze at holiness. It is too bright, too dazzling

for its gross senses; and the vision of it reminds the guilty soul too strongly of what itself *ought to be* and makes it feel too painfully what it *is*.

It therefore, avoids the sight and prefers the contact of that which resembles itself, and thus the intellectual perception becomes darkened so as often not to understand the plainest and simplest relations of truth; and under the influence of the wayward and sinful affections, misunderstands and misinterprets that which otherwise would be divested of all mystery.

From this blinding and deadening influence of sin, it results that men do neither *see* nor *feel* the real condition they are in.

They neither see the unreasonableness of sin, nor feel its ingratitude, nor mourn over its baseness. Nor do they apprehend with any correctness its amazing guilt and criminality.

And, furthermore, so blinded and hardened is the heart, as to have no adequate perception of the *extent* of its depravity—*how* darkened it has become, nor *how* hard and unfeeling it is, nor *how far* it has wandered from God, nor

what an awful *moral distance* there is between itself and him.

Now before such a one can be made to accept of the provisions of the Gospel, it is very evident that two things are necessary. He must be made to feel his guilty condition and then to seek deliverance from it.

But how shall this be done. He *loves* his present condition. He entered on his course of self-indulgence in direct disobedience to God's commands. He dislikes to abandon it. He will not look at the realities of his position, but his wicked heart is ever practicing upon him delusion, and deception; being itself "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Should his mind be brought into contact with all the motives which exist to turn him from his wicked way, they would prove ineffectual; because they will neither be seen in their proper light, nor felt in their proper influence; and therefore is there no hope that he will of himself, ever abandon his sinful course; so that with Redemption abundantly provided for him, his case would still be hopeless.

And here we see, too, how wonderfully God has overcome these difficulties of his position, by giving in connection with the atonement those mysterious operations of his Spirit, by which the darkened mind of man is illuminated, his sensibilities quickened, and he restored in a measure to that clearness of perception, and that sensitiveness of feeling in respect to moral truth, which he would have possessed had he never sinned.

Under the precious influences of that Spirit, he is made to see and feel the greatness and glory of God, the majesty of his law, the beauty of holiness, the deformity of sin, and the dreadfulness of its commission, and his own exceeding guilt and unworthiness; and all the motives of the Gospel, its promises and threatenings, the ingratitude of rejecting an offered Saviour, and the fearful consequences which must follow, are made to come home to him with great clearness and power; and if he does not add to all his previous sins, this, by far the greatest of all, the sin of *resisting* these kind efforts, he is led by them to Repentance—ob-

tains forgiveness for the past, and becomes a "new creature," in Christ Jesus.

Thus in the wisdom and benevolence of God all the difficulties in the way of man's salvation though a sinner, are removed, and the full responsibility of his final destiny thrown entirely on himself. *He may certainly be saved.* And God earnestly desires he should be. And this is why he calls upon him in such tender and imploring accents to "strive" for salvation—to repent of sins—to come to him for pardon—to accept of offered mercy. This is why he presses him with the infinite motives both of his law and gospel—why he holds up Heaven to win him and Hell to stay him—and then follows up the whole with the energies of the Holy Spirit. He does it because he loves his salvation. And he *will* "pluck him as a brand from the burning," unless he does madly *resist* all, and *force* his way to Perdition.

SEC. 6.—*God's perfect benevolence in the constitution and position of the human race.*

The circumstances in which we find the human family, may be divided into two distinct classes—Those which result solely from the arrangement of God and in the disposition of which men have no agency, and—Those which result directly from their own responsible conduct.

Among those of the first class may be noticed the following.

The original constitution of men,

The conditions of infancy,

The fact of man's connection with a physical body,

That he is plied by the temptations of unseen and malignant beings,

That the human race has a progressive development,

That men are subjected to constant labor, and,

That they suffer temporal death for the sin of another.

Other and similar circumstances might be mentioned, but these are the most prominent of those in which men have no responsibility. And in these it is our present object to trace briefly the indications of Divine benevolence.

It is believed that such benevolence can in no way be made so satisfactorily to appear, as on the supposition of an element in man, inseparable from his moral constitution, rendering it certain that he will sin. In carrying out the theory under consideration, therefore, the main object will be to show how, on the supposition of such an element, all the particulars above enumerated appear to have been devised for the express purpose of meeting and controlling it; or at least so affecting it, as to diminish its power over the individual, and lead him eventually to entire submission to his Maker.

1. What is the original constitution of men?

To this question the answer of the Bible is "God made man *upright*." Some commentators refer this to Adam, as though the meaning were that God made Adam upright, but not his descendants.

The word "man," however, appears in the original accompanied by the article, showing that it must be used generically for all mankind, *the human race.**

We conclude, therefore, from the plain declaration of the Scriptures; that the *human race* in their original constitution are created *upright;* and that all in them which differs from uprightness, is to be traced to their own willful and inexcusable perversion of the powers of moral agency. And by upright, as used in the Bible, is not meant, it is supposed, any qualified uprightness—upright in some respects and oblique in others—but, really and truly upright, *made in God's image.*

Adam was made in his image, and was perfect in his constitution, although there was an element in him which led him to sin. So undoubtedly of the angels. And men *now* too are made in God's image: as says the Apostle James, speaking of the tongue, "therewith curse we men made after the similitude of God."

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* See Stuart *in loco.*

The declaration to Noah was, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed, for in the *image of God* made he man," an argument against the commission of murder of no force, unless men are still made in God's image. And Paul says: "Man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the *image* and glory of God."

Is it said that such a constitution in men is inconsistent with the fact of their universal sinfulness? To this it is replied—That if the certainty that all men will sin is to be taken as proof of defect in *original* constitution, then is there a like reason for fastening the same defect upon the original constitution of Adam and the angels, and thus making God the author of a defective constitution; for there was the same previous certainty that *they* would sin.

The present theory is, that the element in them which leads them to sin, is one *inseparable* from the constitution of any and every moral being who has been or will be created; and furthermore that this can not be regarded

as a defect, for they are made in God's image, and in this there are no defects.

2. Conditions of infancy.

We notice only those peculiarities of infancy, which are designed apparently to affect the moral nature *previous* to its exerting its powers in the way of intelligent and responsible action.

First. It is made to commence its existence in a feeble and delicate physical organization; for months previous to birth, placed in circumstances of the utmost conceivable limitation and confinement and obtaining its entire consciousness of existence through the one single inlet of feeling. Being ushered into the world, the tenant still of this feeble structure, it is pressed immediately with numerous physical wants, which it has no means of supplying and for the satisfaction of which it is entirely dependent on the exertions of others; and which, furthermore, it has only the most imperfect means of making known. Consequently many of its wants are unsupplied, and from the commencement of its earthly existence, the desire

of self-gratification is thus subjected to constant check and restraint. Perhaps our impressions respecting this particular aspect of the infant soul are often erroneous; and because we see the constant manifestation merely of what are termed *physical* wants, we conclude that the wants are in the body and not in the soul; and that the body is the instrument, by which the desire of gratification is created. May not *this* be on the contrary the real fact?—that this desire being inherent, and inseparable from the very existence of the soul, and liable to improper indulgence, God has *compelled* it to commence its action in these circumstances of limition where it is necessitated to find its satisfaction through the body in connection, (~~and therefore,~~) with constant restraint and crosses, for the purpose of curbing its imperiousness; and that these physical wants in the infant, therefore, are only the incipient manifestations of this original desire of happiness and of freedom in the pursuit of it—the first movements of that mighty element which, in its final workings, is to decide the soul's eternal destiny.

Such is our idea. For the want is in the soul and not in the body. The *body* can not *desire* either gratification or relief—can not experience either pleasure or pain. The body is the instrument by which desires are gratified, not created; or rather the body determines the *manner* in which the desire of gratification in the soul shall find satisfaction. Undoubtedly, *without a body* desires would be as strong as now, though not in the same direction—the satisfaction of physical wants.

In this view the body is regarded primarily, not as the inlet of wants, but the outlet—the medium through which the restless and confined agent within is ever acting out its imperious self, and seeking its gratification; and through which it is *compelled* thus to seek it, that it may, in the process, be crossed and repressed, disciplined and subdued, until it has learned the lesson of cheerful and entire submission.

Secondly. This desire—this constitutional element, is allowed to commence its workings long before there is any such development of

the reason as would be sufficient to control it. The moral being is made to commence existence where he *can not* but act contrary to his own best good and the good of all connected with him, and still be in no way responsible for his conduct, for the simple reason, as we say, that he *knows no better*. This renders it absolutely necessary that he be subjected to control and restraint to prevent him, in his blind eagerness after immediate gratification, from destroying his own life; or at least, inflicting upon himself serious injury. Thus for a time previous to reaching the point of moral and responsible action, he comes, from the very necessities of his constitution, under a vast amount of restraint, check and guidance, kept up, well nigh without intermission, during his waking hours.

Now why all this? What apparent object is to be secured by this arrangement? The following is suggested.

It should be noticed that to a great extent this restraint must be imposed by the will of another, and is, in its practical influence on the infant soul, precisely of the nature of Law.

To the infant, during this period of irresponsible action, the will of the parent or guardian is the only *law*, the pressure of which, as we have seen, must be almost constantly experienced; and to this, even in the case of the most indulgent parent, it must be compelled in numerous instances to yield, in order to secure it from self-destruction. Not that it is always taught to yield properly; but it can not have its own way always—it must be crossed and refused the objects of its desire in a great variety and multitude of instances.

The restraint of law, therefore, is the great lesson which it is compelled to learn almost from the commencement of existence. And, for aught that appears to the contrary, the *pressure*—the *influence* of this, is precisely the same upon the moulding and forming elements of youthful character, as is the influence of God's law, when further on in life, it meets the soul and presses it with the sense of its responsibility to its Maker.

And, therefore, it is not impossible that the influence of this training upon the original

desire of independence and self-gratification, is such as to prepare the being the more readily to submit to the control of the Almighty. And the influence of it may be such that it is easier for any one of us now, to submit to his authority, than it would have been upon any other possible arrangement.

Thirdly. Another result secured by the peculiar condition of infancy, is, that from the gradual unfolding of the human powers, the course of sin is entered upon with the least possible degree of deliberation.

In the earliest stages of moral obliquity there appears to be no deliberate determination to throw off the authority of *God.* No one knows even when he became a sinner. Hence it results that men begin to sin with the least possible violation of conscience—with the least possible resistance to the sense of moral obligation. On this account the heart is not so hardened as it otherwise would be, nor are the sensibilities so blunted. Consequently, in the work of recovery, there is less of guilt and

obduracy to be overcome and the prospect for salvation proportionably increased.

Fourthly. Another and similar result is that man never *remembers* the time when he became a sinner. There is no dark and dreadful impression upon the back-ground of memory of some particular occasion, when, for the first time he stood and deliberately resolved to be an enemy of God—when his natural dislike of control, led him to cast off his allegiance to his Maker, and to array himself against him. The fallen Angel has such a time ever to remember. Adam had such a time also to remember, and it might have driven him to remediless despair, had it not been that the severity of his temptation softened within him the consciousness of guilt. But, in God's merciful arrangement, all men are spared this dark and dreadful experience.

In the gradual unfolding of the mental and moral faculties, the time when sin was first committed is lost amid the confusion of early and feeble impressions.

And this fact may be an all-important one

in its bearings upon his restoration to holiness and happiness by preventing one fearful obstacle which might otherwise exist to the exercise of confidence in his offended Sovereign.

Whether we look, therefore at the limitation and confinement of our earliest existence—or to the fact that passion is allowed to get the start of reason, thus rendering subjection to the control of others indispensable, even to existence—or to the fact, that we enter on a sinful course in such circumstances as to violate the dictates of conscience in the least possible degree, and never can remember the first sinful act, and suffer on this account far less from remorse than we otherwise should, we see in all these the indications of benevolence seeking our best welfare and aiming apparently to lead us to holiness and heaven. Especially in reference to the sufferings, the pains, and the unrelieved wants of *infancy*, if we may but be permitted to regard them as designed only to meet and modify an inherent element in the soul which is soon to become imperious, and which, without such early

and severe training, will develop itself so strongly as to secure the certainty of ruin, they will all appear to be inflicted only in accordance with perfect benevolence.

Respecting the transition of the soul, however, from innocence to guilt, we know but little. What has been said, it is believed, appears at least plausible; and the strong presumption is, that, for the reasons mentioned, or others, mankind become sinners in the most favorable circumstances possible for their restoration to the favor of God.

At all events the period of infancy and the process to which the mind is subjected in the incipient stages of its unfolding, through its connection with a physical organization, *must* exert some sort of an influence over that mind, by the time it has arrived at the period of intelligent action, by no means *trivial.*

Whatever that influence may be, it has come from the necessities of a condition of which God is the Author and which the infant had no hand in forming, and must therefore be benevolent in its operation. And, while, as to

the *nature* of that connection, the Bible is nearly silent, and while so little can be even *conjectured* respecting it—will any one be bold enough to affirm that the benevolent Being who instituted it, and who is the responsible author of the entire conditions of infancy, has been, by any arrangement whatever, exerting an injurious influence over the soul that he has created, and driving it farther from himself—rendering its subjection to his Holy Will, when that comes to be understood, a *more* difficult matter than it would otherwise have been, or impairing in any way its prospects for holiness?

We should not naturally think thus. We would not believe thus unless compelled to. We seem not to be compelled to such a belief either from Reason or Revelation.*

* We find the following view advanced in an article, in Vol. X. of the Quarterly Ch. Spectator, which we shall have occasion to notice more fully hereafter.

"God, at Creation, foreseeing the future incursions of sin and rebellion into the ranks of his moral creatures, determined upon this great and wonderful measure of placing a part under

3. We notice in the third place, the fact of the connection of the human soul with a physical body liable to disease, suffering and death.

We have already briefly glanced at the evident effort at limitation and confinement in the position of the human soul during the period of infancy. Let us look at this arrangement in its influence upon subsequent life. Why is the soul of man in this world always cramped and confined as in a prison house? We have already supposed the present arrangement of things to have been adopted at the outset with reference to the fact that mankind would sin, and as a means for reaching and reclaiming them. We have supposed also the conditions of infancy to have been imposed

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a system of reclaiming mercy from the very moment of their commencing existence; a system which should begin to exert its peculiar power, in some *respects*, cotemporaneously with the first motions of the moral machinery in the new created soul, and should continue its operation till sin gave way before the power of the Holy Spirit, operating on such a being so adapted to its effectual influences, or become so inveterate by existence, as to render recovery hopeless, in the light of justice and benevolence." Ch. Spec., Vol. X., p. 108.

for the discipline of the moral nature and curbing its inherent impatience of control previous to the sinful indulgence of it. In the same manner we suppose the condition of manhood to be arranged for breaking the stubbornness of that nature afterward, and eventually leading the individual thus affected to humility, penitence and *submission.*

Upon this point also we are not left solely to conjecture. A single passage of the Bible throws a flood of light upon the condition of man in this world in respect to his physical constitution. Rom. 8 : 20, 21, "For the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The explanation which the writer adopts of this passage is substantially the one given in an ingenious and masterly exegesis of it in the Quarterly Christian Spectator, Vol. X., p. 105, from which, many of the thoughts and expres-

sions under this head are taken. His views are as follows.

"The Apostle had been speaking of the adoption of men by God, and of the riches of that inheritance which, as the adopted Sons of God, they would eventually receive; of its exceeding glory as not to be compared with the sufferings of this present time. In proof, now, of his assertion, he alleges the fact that men do earnestly expect such an unfolding of the mysterious designs of God toward this world. They see something so strange in the present constitution of things, if permanent, if final; so contradictory to all just notions of the character of God, that they do, as a race, earnestly expect and look for the development of some great and worthy design and purpose, to be accomplished by this strange system of things; and that development he intimates to be, the 'manifestation of the Sons of God;' that is, the exhibition of a people reclaimed to himself through the operation of this gracious system, and raised, in consequence of it, to the exalted condition of the Sons of God. 'For,' he goes on to say, 'the creature,' that is man, 'was made subject to vanity'—was by a kind of violence, unnatural force, *subjected* to vanity, to frailty, corruption, imperfection, the necessary consequence of his fleshly constitution—'not willingly,' against its own consent; the pure Spirit, so far from courting such an alliance with gross matter, shrinking from it in every sensibility as

abhorrent to all the tendencies of its constitution, seeing in the union itself, nothing but strife, bondage, degradation and wretchedness; 'but by reason of him who hath subjected the same,' by the sole appointment and agency of its Creator, who to accomplish a greater good, has subjected the Spirit to a state involving a lesser evil, 'in hope that the creature itself also should be delivered from the bondage of corruption,'—in the benevolent expectation, that in consequence of bringing on the soul this temporary evil, and causing it to pass through this unnatural and degrading condition, the Spirit, in emerging from it, would also be delivered from the heavy bondage of sin, the servitude of corruption, and be raised 'to the glorious liberty of the sons of God,'—would be translated into that high and distinguishing relation of children of God, being received and adopted of God as his, and welcomed to his favor and love by reason of their having entered the service of holiness, at once so free, as the service for which alone the powers of the Spirit were constituted, and so full of immortal glory." Pp. 108, 109.

"What is the obvious, the necessary construction to be put on this passage? Can it be found to mean anything less than this: that *the present state of being was designed of God as the means of reclaiming rebel souls and of confirming them in holiness?* that this was the great object intended to be accomplished by the subjection of man to his present condition of 'vanity?'" P. 109.

"This then is the interpretation which, it appears to us, must be put on the whole passage,—that the Spirit of man was subjected to this state of vanity and corruption, contrary to all its native tendencies and sensibilities, by the will of its Creator, in the benevolent expectation, that it would, by passing through this state, be delivered from the bondage of sin, and established forever in the free and glorious service of God." Pp. 115, 116.

A brief outline of the course of thought pursued by the author may be presented as follows. After calling attention to the fact that we know of no purely Spiritual existences who have fallen and been reclaimed, he then proceeds to show why a complex state of body and spirit is peculiarly adapted to a system of reclaiming grace.

First—The Spirit is to a great degree hidden from its own view, and its attention is so continually called off and interrupted by the cares which the body brings upon it, and by the weakness and feebleness of the body itself, the organ of all its investigations, that it perceives but little of its odiousness and loathsomeness as sinful, as in rebellion against God.

Consequently the difficulties that lie in the way of eradicating the power of sin and correcting its corrupting influence, are but feebly apprehended. Return therefore to God, appears not so formidable a task.

Secondly—The veil thrown over the Spirit by the body obscures also its view of God—his spotless purity, his perfect holiness, his infinite benevolence. Hence, the fearful opposition, the infinite repugnance, between its own polluted character, and the perfect character of God, are but dimly seen. The difficulties of effecting a reconciliation and producing a similarity in characters so opposite to each other, is therefore not felt to be so great, as to drive to despair, which might be the case, were there a full and unobscured perception of the glory of the divine character and of the degradation of the sinful soul. Could the spotless excellence of God shine forth in unclouded splendor upon the eye of the Spirit, and could its own blackness and deformity appear in full view, is it going too far to assert, that the declarations of eternal truth itself, proclaimed in the tones

of infinite love and pity, might hardly avail to break up the fell despair that would stretch its icy bonds over the soul?

Thirdly—In consequence of this connection of the Spirit with a material body, sin is made to take a form and course of development, that does not bring the will of man in incessantly fretting and perceptible collision with the will of God. A sinful spirit laid bare to itself and perceiving the will of God obstructing its way at every turn, when seeking its own, rather than the pleasure of its sovereign, and thus always brought in direct contact and opposition with him, would feel its malignity ever stirred up and incensed by this continual galling and opposition; and every step forward in its rebellion, would be adding fuel to the fires of its rage against God. Hence, in the case of man, God has partially withdrawn the manifestations of his own will—man's fleshly constitution not only breaks and softens the promptings of his own rebellious spirit against the authority of God, and like oil mollifies the chafings and collision in him of their opposing

wills, but forms also the inlet of ten thousand enjoyments to the soul, from which he almost forgets that the anger of God burns against him.

Fourthly—This complex constitution of man makes him susceptible of mingled good and evil. We have no reason to believe that a pure Spirit can, from its nature, otherwise than enjoy unalloyed bliss or suffer unmingled woe; because, all good and evil are, except in a world of grace, the manifestations of the supreme approbation or displeasure of God,—all being bestowed or inflicted by him as the moral Governor of the universe, and therefore, whenever God is presented directly to the view of the pure Spirit, we must believe that no souls not obedient to his will can enjoy *any good*, or any obedient spirit undergo any evil.

But a mingling of good and evil in the cup of human experience, is absolutely essential to bring the soul to repentance and obedience. Good is necessary to convince of God's willingness to receive and bless the penitent. Evil is necessary to convince of God's dis-

pleasure at sin, and to warn of the final evil consequences of continuing in it. Unmingled good would lead to presumptuous confidence; unmingled evil, to hopeless despair. The fleshly nature of man admits the combination of the two, and therefore renders man's recovery a possible, yea, a hopeful event.

By this view the author of the article also maintains that certain difficulties are explained, several of which we briefly notice.

One question often asked in view of God's perfect holiness and inviolate justice is—"Why are good and evil so unequally distributed among men?"

Answer. As the dispositions of men vary, some demanding more of the influence flowing from good, others more of that which flows from inflicted evil—we should expect that God would treat them in various ways; drawing such as may be so drawn by the manifestations of his love through the attractive power of goodness; and breaking and subduing the stout hearts of others, by the softening force of

suffering; mingling the two in such proportions as best to accomplish his great design; employing now more of this, now more of that, according as their ever varying circumstances may require.

Again it is asked, "Why are the world and its Creator at such variance."

Answer. Because the rebellion of the human heart against God is made by him to take this form of manifesting itself through the love of the world.

It is the flesh that now holds away the affections of man from his sovereign. God has caused the alienation of the will from him to develop itself in this particular mode, and not in direct defiance of his authority; and for the reason already intimated, because here it is tamed and checked, and brought more effectually under his reclaiming influence.

Again. "How can so much filial piety and parental fondness, so much propriety and consistency of conduct, so much kindness and benevolence, as are often witnessed in unregen-

erate men, dwell with a heart wholly perverted and corrupt?"

Answer. "These seeming, and in a certain sense these *real* virtues, that so deservedly draw forth our esteem and approbation, are the mere habitudes of mind produced by an animal constitution. These are the results of a perverted will, placed under the restraints and influence of a fleshly body, the promptings and instincts of an animal nature. They do not flow from a cordial submission to the will of God. Is it asked why God should cause such seeming excellence to be so deceptive, so rotten at the core? It is because through the fleshly constitution of man, God seeks to reclaim him. Hence, he leads him to do acts, and cherish feelings, which savor of virtue, and excite self-approbation and complacency; and thus gives him a taste, and induces a relish for what is really and truly virtuous. Take from man his fleshly body and this material frame for which it is adapted, and these merely moral virtues of social and domestic life vanish at

once. They can not possibly subsist longer. Take away the design of God in subjecting man to this complex nature, and no reason can be given why a heart at enmity with its Maker should still coexist with such praiseworthy external actions.

Again. This view explains why it is that men are so insensible to the *turpitude of sin.* God by this arrangement has partially obscured it from their view, so as to render their restoration to holiness more hopeful and practicable.

The full turpitude of sin, if seen in all its blackness and loathsomeness, must drive the sinner to despair of recovery. The fell remorse which a view of its real nature would enkindle, would burn with such fury in his bosom that the coolness and calmness necessary for penitent reflection could find no place within it, and all idea of the practicability of overcoming it and rising from it be driven forever from his mind.

Hence God in his mercy has wrapped the spirit in garments of flesh, and obscured the

perception of the actual state of a soul under the bondage of sin.

Again. This view explains to us why men are so generally conscious of no malignity toward God. It is because God has provided a channel in which the selfishness of the human heart shall flow out, and yet not sensibly clash against the will of God. Let the will of selfish men move on uninterrupted by God, and all is still and quiet and gentle; but let it strike against his will, and there clash and dash again and chafe and fret, and the feeling of hatred rises and swells and bursts out in implacable resentment and fury. To allow this would defeat God's design in his efforts of redeeming grace; and therefore, has he given man a material body, in which his rebellious spirit shall work and move on, till grace can check and tame and destroy it.

Finally, this view explains the reason of Christian imperfection. Why is it that the will once renewed, the heart once regenerated, brings not forth the good fruits of righteousness always and invariably?

Answer. The affections, put forth through a body of flesh, having been by a long course of sin, bound around forbidden objects, demand a severe, it may be a protracted effort, to be entirely drawn back, and raised to proper objects of attachment.

Though the ways of sin be renounced, and the full and cordial purpose be formed to enter and continue in the ways of righteousness, yet through its connection with the flesh, by reason of its being subject to an influence from the body so long corrupted by sin, the endeavors of the renewed spirit must be weak and feeble, and imperfection must still be naturally expected. Not that this is necessary; not that the will has no power to rise above this tide of corruption and resist this stream of defilement; but it is not a surprising circumstance that it actually does yield and is occasionally borne away.

Still it clings fast to God; of him it will never release its hold. And when this body of pollution shall be laid aside, and the many avenues of temptation which it opened to the soul are closed; when it shall be sensibly in

direct opposition to God, or in positive and direct friendship for him, then he shall find every feeling, every thought, every act, brought under the perfect control of his renewed will, and in entire conformity to the will and law of God.

Such is a brief outline of the article referred to. Although with some of its views not here mentioned, we do not fully accord, yet in the main, it is an article of great beauty, interest and value, and places in a new and striking view the fact of man's connection with a physical body. One thing only would we add.

Through the connection of the soul with a material body the *effects* of sin are both felt and witnessed, here in this world, and thus exert a powerful influence in deterring from its commission and in prompting to its abandonment. The votary of pleasure can advance but a little way in his course of self-indulgence, before he is feelingly reminded by its influence on his physical frame that the end thereof is death; and he derives from the fact a solemn warning against pursuing it. Nor can men take even the most superficial view of what is

passing around them, without reading in the perceived effects of a life of transgression upon the human body, the living and abiding testimony of God against a sinful course. Pain and suffering may indeed come upon the righteous as well as upon the wicked, for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," but these are seen, in the former, to be the result of a mysterious divine appointment, while in the latter they are seen, and in numberless cases very clearly too, to be the natural and necessary outworkings of sinful indulgence, in the very nature of things inevitable so long as the agent is connected with a physical body.

From the view thus presented we see that our connection with a material organization, though the arrangement becomes the occasion of much suffering, is yet manifestly dictated by benevolence, and is designed and most wonderfully adapted to our moral benefit; and if permitted to exert its natural and legitimate influence over us, will eventually, in connection with the divine instrumentality, "deliver us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

4. The next fact, respecting the condition of men we notice, is their *temptation by unseen and malignant beings.*

This has already been briefly adverted to, in noticing the temptation of our first parents.

A word more respecting it in this connection. We can not but feel that the representation so often made that men are *abandoned* to the temptations of Satan, and that he has full power over them, is an unwarrantable representation.

That the adversary has power in this world and exerts it to a certain extent, even that he "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," and works in the children of disobedience, and furthermore, that men ought to resist his temptations, is very clearly taught in the declarations of Inspiration. But it is also as clearly taught, that one of the great "purposes" for which "the Son of God was manifested," was, "that he might destroy the works of the Devil," 1 John 3 : 8. We learn furthermore, that "having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. 2 : 15. We have, therefore, no reason to doubt that the

power of the Devil is exceedingly weakened in this world, and that the brazen front which he assumed in Eden, and "the gleam of malignant joy which shot athwart him" as he looked foward to the ruin of an entire race, and the courage and the boldness with which he entered on the work, were all speedily dissipated by the unexpected promise of the Saviour which immediately followed, and the introduction of the wonderful plan of Redemption.

And furthermore, in connection with it, the impartation of those mysterious influences—before unknown, and which, without the atonement, would have found no appropriate place in the moral system—of God's Holy Spirit, who is now working in the entire world, and moving in his mighty agency upon the hearts of men. Now, therefore, under this wonderful economy, sin does not ruin remedilessly; and the tempted one, whom Satan thought a single sin would banish forever from God, has yet opened before him the way of deliverance. Now also at every turn in his insidious and malignant efforts, is he ever met by the powerful presence and operation of God's infinite

spirit working against him, counteracting his designs, breaking up his deep laid schemes, and in multitudes of instances, causing him to retire from the field baffled, overcome; and the soul, which he had fondly hoped to ruin, plucked from his grasp—made alive unto God from the death of trespasses and sins, and prepared for glory and honor and immortality: and never until the man has shown a determination to serve the Devil, so deep and thorough, that there is, in his case, no hope of saving him, is he given over to his devices.

In such circumstances, the representation that men are mercilessly *abandoned* to the influence of the powers of darkness, is unjust. There is no reason, even, for supposing that temptation is ever permitted in this world, except to that degree which is entirely consistent with the most perfect benevolence. In respect to those who truly love God, we know that God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will in every temptation, provide for them the way of escape. 1 Cor. 10 : 13. Nor have we any reason for supposing that Satan is ever permit-

ted to present temptations to men in this world which they have not abundant ability to resist, nor to exert any influence over them except such as would, *if resisted*, give the enduring spirit the noblest impulse heavenward. Says the apostle James, "*Blessed* is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life." Nor, in case the temptation is *unresisted*, have we any reason for supposing the condition of the sinning one to be any worse than if he had sinned from the mere impulses of his original constitution. Even in case he *follows* the suggestions of the Adversary, and goes down with him to perdition, it may still be true that the very fact of his temptation, will mitigate the torments of his unending remorse.

We have no reason, therefore, for supposing temptation to be allowed in this world to any extent not consistent with the perfect benevolence of God.

5. We notice in the next place *the progressive development of the human race.* We suppose this method of bringing the race into existence to have been adopted mainly for meet-

ing, and counteracting the native opposition of the moral being to the restraints of law, by the motives drawn from *the perceived experience of others.* Had the entire race been created at once, this influence would have been impossible. But upon the plan of a progressive development, there is a vast amount of motive to act rightly, brought to bear upon every individual of the human race, drawn from the observed experience of those who have gone before him. Their actions, with the attendant consequences, are ever presented to his view, so that he sees the certain results of this and that course of conduct upon which he is tempted to enter. To be certain what the result will be, he needs not resort to personal experience. Is he inclined to vicious indulgence? Its victims meet him on every side, carrying with them the clear, unequivocal evidence that such a course is ruinous; and they call upon him in trumpet tones to take warning from their example. Is the path of virtue held up before him, and he exhorted to enter it? Here too the appeal is seconded by obser-

vation on those around him, who have tried the same path; he sees their experience and knows assuredly that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." Such a presentation of motives impelling to virtue and deterring from vice, motives brought thus directly before the individual and coming to him with a degree of influence second only to *personal* experience, would be impossible upon any plan conceivable, other than that of the progressive development of the human race.

But more particularly do we discern the benevolence of a progressive development of the human race, when we look beyond the individual to the mass, and behold the accumulation of motive on the broader field of national experience. What wonderful lessons has God taught us by the workings of his hand in History. How do the records of past ages given to us in his providence demonstrate the great truth, that sin ruins a people, and what a mighty mass of influence has thus been accumulated to deter from its commission.

On no other system of which we can conceive, would this have been possible, except that of a gradual unfolding of the human race. We see therefore in this arrangement, the indication of infinite wisdom and benevolence.

So in the entire circumstances of the human family as arranged by the Almighty, we perceive the workings of the same benevolent desire for human welfare. For instance, the curse of unfruitfulness pronounced upon the earth, on account of which man is doomed to a life-time of toil, is precisely what he needs as a sinful being. Nothing operates more strongly to keep him from being led astray by the propensities of his wayward heart than the necessity for constant and laborious occupation.

So temporal evils coming on us for the sins of others, whereby the innocent are made to suffer on account of the sinful conduct of the guilty—that arrangement so clearly developed in the declaration of God respecting himself, that he "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation,"

may also be regarded as one of the great instrumentalities to deter from the commission of sin.

So temporal death, which has come on the whole human race on account of the sin of the great progenitor, is the fearful and abiding testimony of God against sin—"the animadversion of a righteous God upon it;" and probably nothing has had a stronger tendency to make men fear sin and dread to commit it, than the solemn event which lies across the pathway of every living man, removing him by a visible process to that other future world, pregnant to his guilty conscience, with a righteous retribution.

We omit, however, any more extended notice of either of the last two points, and others of a similar kind which might properly be noticed in this connection, for the reason that they belong to all systems alike, and therefore receive no particular modification from the theory under consideration.

Sec. 7.—*General View of Human Probation.*

We are prepared now to notice the condition of man in this world, with a view to the fact that it is declared to be a probationary state;

and endeavor to ascertain whether he has in it, a *fair probation.* In doing this we only glance at some of the points which have been noticed, by way of obtaining a clear and connected impression of his true situation.

1. We have regarded him as created "upright"—"in God's image," and in all respects in accordance with perfect benevolence.

2. There being in his original constitution an element, inseparable from it, which renders it difficult for him to submit to proper and necessary restraint, and which will certainly and unavoidably, at this stage of creation, lead him to sin, we have supposed him, for this reason, to be subjected from his earliest infancy to limitation and confinement, and compelled for some time previous to the commencement of moral and responsible action, to meet with almost incessant crosses and trials, requiring, in a multitude of cases, submission to the will of others.

3. We have seen that this restraint is of the nature of law, and the same in its general principles of operation as is the law of God; and

have therefore regarded it as a process of training, designed and adapted to prepare him to enter in more favorable circumstances upon a state of probation.

4. We have found no reason, therefore, for concluding that this arrangement is in any way injurious to him; or even that on account of it, he may not meet the demands of his Maker, which cross his natural inclination, with less reluctance to submission, than would have resulted upon any other possible arrangement.

5. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suppose that every being in this world comes to the point of moral and responsible action, in the best circumstances, in which, all things considered, he can possibly be placed.

Notice next, that, having passed this point and entered upon a course of transgression, he then comes immediately into contact with that vast moral machinery which God has put in operation, to lead him to *abandon* sin.

1. The terrible effects of sin upon his own *soul*—the feeling of dishonor and self-degrada-

tion, which the consciousness of it produces within him.

2. The effects of it which are felt upon a delicate physical organization; and from which he receives a multitude of warnings against continuance in an evil course.

3. The awful effects of sin as witnessed about him in the experience of others.

4. The still more earnest appeal made in the accumulated history of past ages—the record of God's treatment of the individual sinners of other times, and especially the consequences which have followed the commission of sin on the broader field of national experience.

5. The whole array of providential dealings, both in the way of judgment and mercy, which meet him at every footstep in life, warning him against transgression, and pointing him ever toward the path of righteousness as the only safe and proper one, and mingling in the cup of his experience, happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, in just that proportion best adapted, on the whole, to break asunder the bonds of

sin—to make him feel the emptiness of earth and create a longing for the rest of Heaven.

6. The bright and beautiful world in which he lives, filled with every variety of divine manifestation, and illustrating in every conceivable aspect the wisdom and benevolence of God—on sea and land; on plain, and mountain, and stream; in the tinted flower and the crystalled snow-flake; in the vast amount of animal enjoyment; in the myriad forms of insect life; in the changing seasons; in summer and winter; in sunlight and in shade.

7. The infinite provisions of the *atonement*, ample as are the necessities of the world and intended for him *personally*, for "Christ tasted death for *every man*."

8. The *invitations* given to partake in its benefits, absolutely unlimited and free to all; "Ho! *every one that thirsteth*, come ye to the waters." "Come, for *all things are now ready*." "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life *freely*."

9. The unequivocal declaration of God that he is "not willing that he should perish."

"Have I any pleasure *at all* that the wicked should die"—plainly implying that no end whatever will be secured by his punishment, which will make it otherwise than a painful duty—a dreadful necessity.

10. His pleasure expressed with equal clearness that man should secure salvation. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die *and not that he turn from his evil way and* LIVE;" where the declaration is equally plain that *all* of his pleasure is in the direction of salvation. Again he says to the sinning one, when past recovery, "O that thou *hadst* hearkened unto my voice, then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

11. The most powerful appeal conceivable, made to his *desire of happiness*, in the eternal rewards of Heaven, promised on condition of repentance.

12. The most fearful appeal possible, made to his *fear* and dislike of suffering, in the perdition threatened as the consequence of confirmed impenitence.

13. The strongest possible appeal to *affection*

in the sacrifice of God's only Son, who "came into the world to save sinners;" who "died for the ungodly;" and respecting whose work Christ himself said, "For God so LOVED the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

14. The powerful agency of the Holy Spirit, "God's last best gift to man," operating upon his heart, to give efficacy to all these means and motives and instrumentalities, and striving with unutterable earnestness to lead him to repentance.

15. Finally the affecting representation of "all Heaven in a stir about his restoration; so that there can not a single son or a single daughter, be reclaimed from sin to holiness without an acclamation of joy among the hosts of Paradise:" and however humble and unworthy his position may be, still can it be said to him, "that the eye of angels is upon him, and that his repentance would, at this moment, send forth a wave of delighted sensi-

bility throughout the mighty throng of their innumerable legions."

Viewed in this light the world may be regarded as one mighty mass of means and efforts for saving men—as a vast *work-room*, filled with every description of the most powerful and complicated moral machinery, from the awful presence and operation of the Almighty Spirit down to the minutest material organization; and all arranged and adapted to the one single object of working out *salvation for the sinful;* and God himself presiding over all—directing all—the Omnipotent energy that keeps all in motion. We may thus regard him as throwing himself, with the entire resources of his infinite nature, on the side of repentance and salvation, and day and night urging on the mightiest instrumentalities of the universe to pluck sinning men from perdition, "*not willing that* ANY *should perish;*" and even leaving nothing unattempted for the accomplishment of the work. "*What more* COULD *have been done to my vineyard that I have* NOT *done in it.*"

In this view the whole human race occupy

the most favorable position possible for securing salvation. Nothing could be added to it, and nothing could be taken from it without impairing its perfect adaptation to this end.

Placed in these circumstances, the sin which they will certainly yet inexcusably commit, *need* not result in their entire ruin. Even though guilty and condemned, there is still hope of restoration to God's forfeited favor; and all the means and instrumentalities possible are brought into operation for securing this end. But when this probation on earth is finished, each individual will have decided for himself his immortal destiny, and will forever retain the character with which he leaves the world; "He that is filthy, will be filthy still, and he that is righteous, will be righteous still."

Now if these circumstances do not constitute a fair probation, then it might be a question whether the human mind can conceive of circumstances which would. Certainly no *reason* appears why it is not a *perfectly* fair one; nor why God, in his entire dealings with men, has not been actuated by the most sincere regard

for their welfare; nor why men are not entirely inexcusable if they continue in impenitence and rebellion against him. If such a probation as this fails, then surely the case of an individual may be regarded as remediless. If this fails, then manifestly, does he continue on in his sinful course in a spirit of *determined resistance* to all possible influences and efforts to save him; and the conclusion is inevitable. "If God spared not the *angels* that sinned but cast them down to Hell," much more shall not he be spared, and if "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God;" and he "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

Is it said that such a probation belongs only to those who have their birth and education in a Christian land? This is granted, and for such these pages are intended. They at least have a fair probation, and must abide its results.

In respect to those less highly favored, "the judge of all the earth will do right," and let no one in his presumption suppose that God will be less kind and faithful in his dealings with the heathen than he himself would be. Most certainly the light of nature which *they* have will not measure *his* guilt; nor will the superior light of Revelation which he enjoys, measure their guilt. God will deal finally with every man "*according to his deeds.*"

"The servant which *knew* his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes.

"But he that *knew not*, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes." Luke 12 : 47, 48.

In suggesting what we have thus far, in respect to God's dealings with this world, let none suppose a moment that an attempt is made to divest his administration of all mystery. Multitudes of questions may be asked respecting those dealings, to which we can give no answer. We know only "in part," and enough remains unknown and unfathomable, even by

conjecture, to throw the human spirit upon the exercise of simple faith as its only satisfactory refuge. The poor finite worm—the creature of a day upon his footstool, can not comprehend the infinite Jehovah; and his most becoming position, is when, seating himself humbly at his feet, he reposes confidingly and affectionately on his infinite faithfulness and benevolence as one who does "all things well," and who makes "all things work together for good to them that love him."

This serenity of Christian faith is the most noble and delightful and becoming exercise of the human soul, and the one above all others most acceptable in the sight of God. Many things has he hid entirely from our comprehension, doubtless for this very reason, that he might teach us thus to "walk by *faith* and not by *sight*;" and to those who are willing, where they can not understand the reason of his dealings, and where all looks dark and mysterious, still to trust in him in the exercise of this simple faith, will it be said at last, "Blessed are they that have *not seen* and yet have *believed*."

To very many, however, of the objections which are made to the Divine dispensations, it is a good and sufficient answer, that God, as a benevolent being, must consult for the highest welfare of his universe *forever;* and *if* his present action—the present manifestation he is making of himself, is to be the foundation on which the workings of his great moral system are to rest hereafter, then must he have reference *now* in his *every act*, to all those future workings. In this view what would appear to our limited observation as expedient, might, on the higher range of the divine omniscience, be still utterly inexpedient; and on the other hand, that which, to our limited capacities, might seem strange and unaccountable and even unnecessary, may yet be that very thing, without which a universe of moral beings could not be made to exist in holiness and happiness.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNFALLEN ANGELS.

1. *When were the holy angels created?*

As has been already stated,* there is no authority from the Scriptures for giving them one position in preference to another in the moral system; and we are at perfect liberty to fix the period of their creation at any time which will best enable us to explain and harmonize the *known* facts of reason and revelation. It is believed that the common assumption that they were created at the same time with the fallen angels, and existed together with them for a time in holiness and happiness, has not only no foundation in Scripture, but has done more than almost any other thing to introduce confusion and apparent absurdity into the

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* Part I., Chapter III.

entire department of theological investigation. For this position being assigned them—the question next arises, why did not they sin as well as the others? And if they could be kept from sinning, why could not all? True, it does not prove that because God could keep a part of them in a state of holiness, therefore he could keep all; while at the same time, no good reason appears why he could not; and the supposition of a partial apostacy usually made, invariably leaves the impression on the common mind that sin might have been readily prevented in a moral system, but that God allowed it to exist, because, for some unimaginable reason, he *preferred* it should—a view utterly and awfully repugnant to God's infinite holiness, to his unmitigated loathing of transgression and to his entire representations of himself in the Bible—and which should ever be regarded with unqualified detestation.

For this reason, in carrying out the present theory, we have chosen to place the time of their creation subsequent to that of Adam, as stated in Part I., Chapter IV. The idea is by

no means a novel one. All possible periods have been assigned to their creation. Some have held "that the angels were created before the visible world, and that this is the reason Moses does not mention them." Others that they were created on the "*first* of the six days;" others that they were created on the "*fourth* day;" while others again have held the view we have advanced above, that they were created after man; among whom was "Gennadius in the fifth century," and "Schubert of Helmstädt in modern times."*

At what particular period since the creation of man they were brought into existence, we have no means of determining.

Perhaps they were not created till after the deluge; or if created previously to that event, they may not have been confirmed in holiness, until after that time. We only know that no mention is made of their being employed on errands to this world, until the time of Abraham.

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* See Knapp's Theology. Sec. LIX. 4, (1.)

2. *Are they confirmed in holiness?*

In the general view presented of Probation, Part I., Chapter V., it was regarded as the most plausible supposition, that every moral being receives his trial of obedience at a comparatively early period in his existence. This view was advocated, in the absence of all opposing evidence, on the ground of a supposed analogy, in that respect, between the case of Adam and that of all other newly created intelligences. On this ground, therefore, we should suppose the angels to have already received the trial of their virtue, and to have become confirmed in holiness; and that they now stand forth to view as the first example of moral beings who have never sinned; and who, as newly created beings, have been determined, in the formation of their character, toward obedience and submission, and have entered therefore on an eternal career of holiness and happiness.

3. *Why have they not sinned?*

The answer to this question will be readily anticipated, in part at least, from the views which have already been presented.

First, We suppose them to have been made acquainted with the history of the fallen angels, and to have been brought to the fullest possible extent under the fearful motives which their sad experience furnished against rebellion.

Secondly, That they were made acquainted with the wonderful plan of redemption for guilty men, were permitted to see its workings, and behold in it the height and depth of God's unutterable affection, and were thus drawn to him in wonder, admiration and love.

Thirdly, They may also have been very powerfully affected by various other dealings of God with mankind—may have even witnessed the destruction of the old world for its wickedness, and received from it a vivid impression of God's displeasure against sin, as well as his love of holiness in saving the only righteous family on earth.

Fourthly, Those who, previous to their creation, had entered Heaven as the trophies of redeeming love, may have been commissioned to unfold to them their own blissful experience of the goodness and mercy of God, and to

beseech them for Christ's sake to cleave with purpose of heart unto the Lord, and ever to love and obey him; and in so doing have found their own first experience in the delightful employment which we suppose will be given them forever. This latter point will be resumed hereafter.

We may therefore regard their present position as one in which, either for the reasons above mentioned, or for others, they are confirmed in their love and devotion to the interests of God's great kingdom, and are ever prostrating themselves in humble and affectionate submission before his throne.

And now no thought of rebellion will ever stir in those holy bosoms. The motives to the love and service of God appear so to surpass all existing inducements to self-indulgence and sin, that temptation falls powerless upon them and will fall thus forever.

On the one hand they behold a firm and stable administration—a moral government whose law must be obeyed, or the penalty of its violation, however dreadful, will certainly be executed, as is shown by the fearful end of those

who have tried the experiment of rebellion; and the feeling swells within their bosoms, "O Lord who shall not *fear* thee."

They look upon the sacrifice of the blessed Redeemer—the humiliation and suffering which he was willing to undergo for human redemption, and high above all other emotions swell those of love, adoration and praise; and the song heard on the plains of Bethlehem is ever repeating and reëchoing through Heaven, "Glory to God in the Highest—on earth peace, good will to men."

Absorbed therefore in the contemplation of this stupendous exhibition of the Divine character, they "desire to look into it,"* and to know more and more of the "great mystery of godliness" in which "God was manifest in the flesh;" and they find their highest happiness in bestowing their affectionate attention upon those redeemed ones whom the Saviour has loved with an everlasting love, and whose "names are written in the book of life from the

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* 1 Peter 1 : 12.

foundation of the world;" for they are "*all* now ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

All that is claimed for this is, that it may *possibly* be true,* but additional plausibility may, perhaps, be imparted to it, by a passage of Scripture, (Eph. 3 : 10,) which seems to bear directly upon the point we are considering. "To the intent that now unto the Principalities and Powers in Heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." This passage is worthy of special notice.

First, It is the "manifold wisdom of God"

* The following striking passage occurs in the recent work of Conybeare and Howson. "This statement of the infinite extent of the results of Christ's redemption, (which may well fill us with reverential awe,) has been a sore stumbling-block to many commentators, who have devised various (and some very ingenious) modes of explaining it away. Into these this is not the place to enter. It is sufficient to observe that St. Paul is still led to set forth the true greatness of Christ in opposition to the angelolatry of the Colossian heretics, intimating that far from Christ's being one only of the angelic hierarchy, the heavenly hosts themselves stood in need of his atonement." Conybeare and Howson, Vol. II., p. 386, note 5.

which is made known; *i. e.*, there is here made an important exhibition of God's *character and attributes.*

Secondly, It is made by means of the redeemed church of Christ from this world—and undoubtedly by what Christ has done and suffered in its behalf.

Thirdly, It is made to the Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places. The order of beings now happy in Heaven are the ones particularly affected by it.

Fourthly, It is made *now, at the present time.* The particle in the original does not appear as a mere expletive, but as an adverb denoting emphatically *present time.*

Now although the *reason why* the "manifold wisdom of God," in the work of redemption is made known to the inhabitants of Heaven, is not declared to us, yet with the fact before us, distinctly stated in the Scripture, that *it is* thus made known, the supposition is surely not improbable that it may have a direct bearing upon their eternal welfare, and even be invested with all that importance which has been given it in

the foregoing hypothesis, and which makes it the grand agency for saving them from final apostacy and ruin.

And this view is rendered still more plausible from the fact that they are represented as being so deeply interested in the work of redemption and so anxious to explore its mysteries—to "look into" it, as if they had in it a *personal* interest.

We may also notice the representation which John gives in Revelation, of the song sung by the angelic host whose number was "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands."

It is not enough for them simply to praise God as their Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. It is not enough simply to praise Jesus Christ as being "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." But for some reason, the kindling emotions of their souls, find their only appropriate expression in "saying with a loud voice, '*Worthy is the* Lamb that was slain.'" The Lamb *slain*—Christ *dying*, is with *them* also, as with the "elders,"

the grand theme of their rejoicing. And who shall say that to this death of the Redeemer, and the manifestation made by it, of the mercy and the love of God, they may not also be indebted for their eternal happiness, and that this very fact it was, which caused them to swell with such overflowing rapture the "new song." The supposition is certainly not inadmissible.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION IN ITS RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE.

Is it more reasonable to suppose Redemption limited, for the most part, to human salvation, or that it is designed also to affect the welfare of the entire universe of moral beings? Shall we consider it as lying at the foundation of the mightiest interests conceivable, and involving the happiness of all worlds, or, with Chalmers, "that on the high scale of eternity it is but one of those *passing* and *ephemeral* transactions which crowd the history of a never ending administration."* There appear to be reasons for giving it the highest of all places in the Divine economy.

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* Astronomical Discourses, Ser. 4, end.

First. There is nothing in the Bible to forbid it.

Secondly. There is nothing in the nature of the case to forbid it. There is no inconsistency in connecting with so great an event as the death of God's "only and well beloved Son," results of the greatest conceivable magnitude.

Thirdly. The general language of the Bible harmonizes perfectly with such a view.

The atonement is there represented as a most stupendous work in itself, and its results as permanent and surpassingly glorious.

It is represented *in itself* as the greatest conceivable work. Christ is declared to be the "Lord of glory"—"the Creator and upholder of all things," "for whose pleasure they are and were created."

And yet there was an object to be secured of such vast moment, that "he who was in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be coveted to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death."

"WHEREFORE," continues the Apostle, (thus directly connecting his work on earth with his subsequent exaltation in Heaven,) "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus" (*i. e.*, Saviour) "every knee should bow in Heaven and earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father;"—as though his one work as Saviour of Men would become the foundation of his exaltation in Heaven, and of those peculiar honors which would be paid him through the universe, and which would redound equally to the glory of God the Father. What higher impression could be conveyed of the intrinsic greatness and glory of the work of Redemption.

Fourthly. The *sacrifice on the part of God* in giving his Son for human salvation, is represented as exceedingly great. "For God so loved the world that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." And

"He that spared not *his own Son* but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us *all things*."

"And again when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith: 'And let all the Angels of God worship him'"—as if upon the occurrence of such an event there was a call for the particular notice of all heaven. And says the Apostle furthermore, "God—hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, *when he had by himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" or as the Apostle expresses it in another place, "after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins *forever* sat down on the right hand of God," as if the great work of eternity was then finished.

And there John heard the whole universe of beings chanting his praise in his distinctive character still as the "*Lamb slain*." "And

every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, heard I saying, 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.'"

Fifthly. The wonderful and inconceivable exaltation of the Redeemed, favors also the supposition of the wide spread influence of the work of Redemption; for we should infer that the consideration with which they were treated, and the elevation of their position, would correspond in a great measure with the lustre which their redemption had shed upon the character and administration of the Almighty, and with the blessings secured by it to the universe of moral beings. In describing the greatness of that exaltation the Scriptures exhaust the capacities of language.

They are a "crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of God"—they are "chosen of God and precious"—"A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"—

they are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"—they are "builded together for a habitation of God"—they are "in Christ and he in them," and "*all things* are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's."

Furthermore, *the glory which God has given Christ* he has given them, and "the Church" is called Christ's "body, the *fullness* of him that *filleth all in all*," *i. e.*, the Church is the *fullness of the Infinite Jehovah!*

Moreover, "it doth not yet appear what they shall be," but we know that their *future* exaltation in Heaven will be inconceivably glorious.

"The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" they shall sit with Christ in his throne *even as he overcame and is set down with his Father in his throne;*" they shall "*shine forth as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father;" they shall "sit on the *right hand* of God," as the place of peculiar honor and distinction; they shall "*judge angels*;" they shall be "*kings and priests* unto

God," and upon them shall be accumulated "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"

Sixthly. So immeasurably vast are the final results of Redemption, that the Redeemer "shall ee of the travail of his soul *and be satisfied.*"

Seventhly. Additional plausibility may perhaps be imparted to the supposition we are considering, from the following passage of Scripture, Eph. 2 : 7—"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

This declaration is worthy of special notice.

1. It is the "exceeding riches of his grace and kindness," which are made known, *i. e.*, there is an exhibition made of God's character of tenderness and compassion, mercy and love, those traits of all others the most subduing and winning.

2. This exhibition is made by means of his "kindness toward *us* through Christ Jesus," *i. e.*, his kindness in providing for the guilty sinners of this world, the atonement by Jesus Christ.

3. This exhibition is to be made "in the ages to come," ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις. Most commentators are agreed in making this expression refer to all future time both in this world and the next, *i. e.*, that this exhibition is to be made through *eternity.*

4. It is to be made to some kind or order of beings, and for some great and glorious object, an object of sufficient magnitude and importance to make the redeemed church a "crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of God,"—"the *fullness* of him that filleth *all in all.*"

It may be interesting to notice the foregoing passage in immediate connection with another previously quoted. (P. 262.) Taking the two together, a turn like this may be given them to accord with the present theory. "Now," at the present time, the character of God is "made known" by the scheme of Redemption to the "Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places," but "in the ages to come," it will be "shown" (the Bible does not say to whom—

our theory only suggests) on a broader and a grander scale, to ranks and orders of beings innumerable who are hereafter to exist, and who, like the "Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places," may be bound by this same manifestation in affectionate obedience to the Lord their Maker.

Now in the light of the foregoing considerations, though we may not be able to imagine what are the precise relations of the Atonement to the entire system of things, yet we certainly can not err in giving those relations too great importance. The only fear is that our highest conceptions of them will fall entirely below their real grandeur.

Whatever place, therefore, in the moral universe, we give the plan of Redemption, should be one adapted to elevate that plan in our apprehension, to the highest degree, and to fill us with wonder and admiration.

In particular, in order to harmonize with the Scripture view of the atonement, it should be represented—

First—As the great and only sacrifice for

sin, and so great that after this "one sacrifice" the Redeemer "forever sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10 : 12.

Secondly—As so great a work that it lays the foundation of Christ's exaltation throughout the universe—"*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him," &c. Phil. 2 : 6–11.

Thirdly—It should hold such a place as to correspond with the peculiar and wonderful exaltation of the saints in glory as exhibited in the passages of Scripture which have been quoted.

Fourthly—The results which are made to flow from it, should be vast enough to "satisfy" the Redeemer for all his mighty sufferings. Is. 53 : 11.

These conditions, it is believed, are fully answered by the present hypothesis.

This supposes that the scheme of Redemption has been introduced at the dawning-time of the Moral Creation, as a full and final exhibition of the Divine Mercy, and that the history of this, handed down through the coming ages of eternity and attested by the great company of the redeemed, will be fully suffi-

cient to make known to the universe forever the manifold wisdom of God, and become the grand crowning motive by which all worlds will be held in obedience and love to the Almighty—and thus the Redemption of this single world by Jesus Christ, will lie at the foundation of the entire happiness of the universe forever.

CHAPTER V.

EMPLOYMENTS OF THE REDEEMED HEREAFTER.

It is sometimes objected to the Bible representations of the employments of Heaven, that the soul is so constituted as to demand for its highest happiness an unending career of usefulness, and that the simple employment of praise fails fully to exercise its vast and varied powers.

The Bible, however, by no means *limits* the occupations of the redeemed to this. It does indeed represent this as their employment in part; and it must necessarily be; for how could a soul redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, restrain its gushing emotions of affection for its God and Saviour from breaking out in rapturous expression. Every contemplation of what he was in character and what he was exposed to in the way of punishment, compared

with what he is as a forgiven sinner, and what he will be through eternity, *must* fire his soul with wonder, gratitude and exultation; making the new song forever new; swelling his bosom with irrepressible rapture and making him strike his golden harp in richer and still richer melody. But this is only one part of his occupation. There is nothing whatever in the Bible to militate against the supposition, that everything which is fitted to develop the powers of the mind and unfold before it the greatness and glory of the Almighty—every kind of research into the mysteries of nature which may be afforded in the almost infinite variety of the works of God—everything which tends to exalt and ennoble the sensibilities and draw them out in delightful expression, will be thrown wide open to the experience and enjoyment of every redeemed soul. "For the LAMB that is in the midst of the throne shall *feed* them."

Perhaps, however, those who have attempted, like Dick in his Philosophy of a Future State, to sketch the probable employment of the soul

hereafter, have not given sufficient prominence to that which is its peculiarly appropriate and delightful occupation, and have confined it *too much*, in their speculations, to the contemplation of material things and the study of the natural sciences.

Reasoning from analogy, we should suppose that the peculiar employment which a renewed and sanctified soul most delighted in on earth, would be the employment in which it would most delight in Heaven, and would be, therefore, the employment which God would most probably give it.

What is the peculiar work which above all others delights the soul of the Christian on earth. The answer unhesitatingly is,—making known to others the wonderful dealings of God with himself in the way of mercy and forgiveness, that he may lead others also to love and adore him.

And furthermore, no conceivable employment more perfectly accords with Christian *principle* and *character;* for benevolent action appears

to be, the *necessary expression* of the Christian life. The thing which above all others ministers to the happiness of one who has been renewed by the Spirit of God, is to follow in the footsteps of his Divine Master and "*do good.*" And the particular *kind* of good which most delights him, is that which has for its direct object the glory of the Redeemer; and therefore, as has been said, the gushing emotions of his heart find no more natural or joyful expression, than when, by proclaiming to others what has been done for himself as a redeemed sinner, he can win them also to the love of his Saviour.

The present theory proposes this as the grand employment of the redeemed hereafter, *making known to newly created beings the love and mercy of God as exhibited in their own salvation*, and *thus* "showing the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward them through Christ Jesus."

Nor does this appear in any great degree improbable. It is by no means incredible that, in time to come, moral beings may be created,

and be as liable to transgression as were Adam and the fallen angels ; and if they should be, that the redeemed from among men may be employed on a mission of love and mercy to them, as the angels are and have been to the inhabitants of this world. Nor is it improbable, that beings thus situated could be very much influenced in their future conduct, by the representations which might be made to them by redeemed souls, of the infinite kindness and compassion of God, and even be led by it, so to regard his character and so to admire this wonderful exhibition of his perfections, as to yield themselves to him in cheerful obedience when otherwise they would not.

At all events, the explicit declaration of the Bible is, that God is, in some way, by means of the redeemed church, to make an exhibition „in the ages to come" of "the exceeding riches of his grace;" and to whatever beings this exhibition is to be made, it is hardly conceivable that the very subjects of salvation should perform no *active* part in such a manifestation, especially when such an employment would be

to them so surpassingly delightful. It is hardly conceivable that God should merely array them before the universe, to be gazed at as the objects of his redeeming mercy, while they themselves remain silent. It seems far more natural that he should employ them directly in making known to others the wonderful love which God had shown to them, and send them abroad through his universe to proclaim his "manifold wisdom" and the "exceeding riches of his grace" in their salvation.

And so we conclude it, at least, *possible*, that this exalted employment may be ours hereafter, to go from world to world as they are successively peopled with moral beings, telling ever the story of redemption—proclaiming ever the love and mercy of Him, "who redeemed us to God by his blood," and singing ever the "new song," "Worthy is the Lamb," and all to lead them to the love and praise of the same adorable Redeemer.

This view opens before us, in the future world a career of usefulness, benevolence and blessedness so magnificent, that the Christian

heart can ask for nothing more, for it can conceive of nothing more perfectly corresponding to the highest aspirations of its own sanctified nature.

It discerns in this the employment that it most loves on earth, and would most desire to have prolonged through eternity. And it *may be* thus prolonged, for there may be an eternity of *creation* as well as of time, and as space is unbounded, so may the work of creation be without end.

And what a result! What glory would accrue to the Blessed Redeemer and to us who are to share in his exaltation, to behold worlds on worlds *forever* coming into existence, and successively peopled with intelligent beings, and the happiness of all depending on the love and mercy of God as exhibited in *our* redemption.

The spontaneous expression of the Christian heart in the contemplation of such a result seems to be, not, "*it is not improbable*," but "*may I believe it possible?*" And the answer is, neither reason nor revelation contain any-

thing which militates against such a supposition.

Is it objected, that this gives the redeemed too prominent and important a position in the divine administration?

No more so, it is replied, than the Bible gives them. The Bible makes them "UNTO GOD *kings and priests.*" They are a "crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of God." They are "chosen of God and precious," and chosen too for the noblest of all conceivable employments—for says the Apostle—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, *that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*," and the present supposition only gives them in Heaven and through eternity, the same delightful employment which God has given them on earth.

CHAPTER VI.

GRAND OBJECT NOW TO BE SECURED.

The present theory contemplates the following as the grand object now to be secured, *viz.*, the creation of such a kind and amount of motive, as shall be sufficient to induce a moral being at the commencement of his existence, to deny himself freely and willingly at the command of God, submit to whatever requirement he may impose upon him as a test of his allegiance, and thus become confirmed in obedience.

Furthermore, to bring into existence such a kind and amount of motive as shall be sufficient to accomplish this, not merely for a single being, or a single world of beings, but for all the countless myriads as they are successively created, who shall eventually fill the great empire of Jehovah.

It supposes such a result can not be secured except by the manifestation of God's character, as developed in his combined dealings with his moral creatures from the creation of the fallen angels to the judgment of this world, and that the accumulation of the requisite amount of motive for securing the future welfare of the universe, will be the signal for the winding up of human affairs—that the farther progress of sin will then be arrested, and the universe of moral beings subsequently created, will move on forever in harmony with the Great Creator. The plausibility of this may be shown from a few considerations:

1. Neither reason nor revelation furnish anything which renders it in the least degree improbable.

2. God is "now" for some great purpose thus manifesting his character to the "principalities and powers in heavenly places," and will continue to manifest it in the "ages to come."

3. So important is this world's history in its bearing upon the Divine Administration, that

a time has been appointed, when every transaction in it, from its commencement to its final conflagration, will be made to pass in solemn review before the assembled universe. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness," at which time God will "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil,"—the great object doubtless still being the manifestation of God's character in his dealings with men.

4. Lastly. Whether the end in view be this one supposed, or some other equally glorious, it is still worthy of special notice, that, from the first creation of moral beings till the present time, motives adapted to secure such a result have been constantly accumulating.

The sad consequences which followed the rebellion of Satan—the gloom which shrouded the world at the fall of Adam—the light which broke upon it in the plan of Redemption—every one of God's subsequent dealings with the world, whether in the way of judgment or mercy—every providential dispensation—

every sun that rises and sets upon the world, lengthening out the day of grace to its guilty population—every gentle rain that descends alike upon the just and upon the unjust—every striving of his Spirit—every exhibition of patience with a hardened transgressor—every sinner saved and every sinner lost, are each and all manifesting still more and more gloriously the perfections of Jehovah, and bringing into existence, a great amount of motive to his love and service. The mass is thus constantly accumulating. The perfections of God are becoming more and more fully illustrated. The moral beings already existing are becoming more and more fully acquainted with the character and attributes of the Almighty; and if any beings are hereafter to be created, they will come into existence with far stronger inducements before them to render to God a willing and cheerful obedience, than could have affected the minds of many of their predecessors.

In the light of this latter consideration especially, it appears by no means improbable

that the creation of the requisite amount of motive for securing the future welfare of a universe of moral beings, is the grand object to which all of God's providential arrangements have present reference.

CHAPTER VII.

RECAPITULATION.

A BRIEF synopsis of the foregoing theory may be presented as follows.

1. A free moral agent, acting rightly, is the happiest of beings, since he only is capable of experiencing the happiness which flows from an approving conscience, or of being drawn into an intelligent sympathy with God, the great fountain of blessedness.

Moreover, the affection of such a being promotes the happiness of the object of it beyond any other conceivable thing; and therefore, a universe of such beings loving and serving God, would be of all conceivable systems most gratifying to him; and therefore although a small portion of them would pervert their free-

dom and sin, yet benevolence might still demand the creation of such a system, because the happiness secured by it, would in the end greatly overbalance that of any other possible.

2. The gratification of natural desires—the seeking of his own happiness in his own way, is that which, *from the very nature* of such a being, he must exceedingly prize, and can not relinquish without *self-denial;* and therefore very strong motives may be necessary to induce him to submit unconditionally to his Maker, as he must do, to become confirmed in holiness and to act in harmony with God's moral government, which requires the merging of all wills in one controlling will, as the only possible security against "confusion and every evil work."

3. It is possible, that when moral beings were first created, there were not such motives existing as would actually induce them to surrender their wills to God, although from the existence of the material system, the happiness of the lower orders of creation, and their own wonderful natures, they had sufficient

knowledge of his character as a Being of power and benevolence, to render them inexcusable for withholding obedience; and though all possible motives were accumulated before their minds—even infinite happiness on the one hand, and infinite misery on the other, (and we know not that any other influence than motive could safely be used with them under a system of mere law,) they still *all* rebelled and were punished according to the degree of light they enjoyed, being now "reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."

4. That the creation of man and his subsequent redemption furnished a vast additional amount of motive, and that this overwhelming manifestation of God's character as a being of infinite mercy, was the great motive which either has confirmed, or will hereafter confirm the angels in Heaven in obedience, and bind them forever in affectionate submission to himself, "*all*" being now "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

5. That the moral system is yet in its infancy, and that the fallen and the unfallen angels and ourselves are the only moral beings as yet created. That the grand object now to be secured, is an array of motive which shall be sufficient to induce moral beings, at the commencement of their existence to submit to all God's requirements, pass the period of their probation in safety, and thus become confirmed in obedience to God; and that all the present arrangements of the universe have reference to securing this one end.

6. That after the judgment of this world, this end will have been reached; and the dealings of God with rebel angels and impenitent men, but above all his dealings with redeemed sinners, will, together, make such a grand and glorious, as well as tender and melting display of God's character, that no newly created being will think of withstanding it; and when he is made fully to apprehend what God has done, written out as the history of it will be upon the records of eternity, and the redeemed and the damned being living witnesses to the truth

of it, all thought of rebellion will be forever banished from his mind.

7. That therefore, after the judgment, God will proceed with the work of creating moral beings and people a universe of worlds, seeing that the certainty will then be secured of their remaining obedient, and therefore supremely blest.

8. That to secure this grand result he will employ the redeemed from this world throughout the "ages to come," in making known the moral splendor of his character to the various worlds of intelligent beings as they shall be successively peopled; sending them on errands of love through his universe to proclaim forever "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to them through Christ Jesus,"—to be telling ever the story of Redemption, and singing ever the "new song"—forever new—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and honor and glory and blessing."

9. That the Redeemer shall thus "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;" inasmuch as the vast amount of happiness which

shall eventually result from, perhaps, an *eternity* of creation, shall all appear to have been secured by his sufferings and death; and so "he shall see all things both which are in Heaven and which are on earth gathered together in one, even in him:"—so shall he realize "the joy set before him," for which he "endured the cross and despised the shame," and being "seated at the right hand of God," shall receive the homage of all intelligent beings, and behold this very "sacrifice of himself for the sins of of the world," lying at the foundation of the entire happiness of the universe, through eternal ages.

THE END.

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Theory of the moral system

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Chas E. Thurman